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Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam



PART 2—SKANDHAS 6-12

Ādyaśakti Svāmī, Editor

Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam

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Sixth Skandha

Chapter I—Triśirā's Austerities

1-12. The Ṛṣis of the Naimiṣa forest addressed Sūta (fondly): "O highly fortunate one! Your nectar-like words are very sweet. We are not satiated with what you have described to us as the auspicious sayings of Dvaipāyana Vyāsa. O Sūta! We desire to ask you again to narrate to us the auspicious sayings of this Purāṇa—beautiful, famous, sin-destroying and authorised by the holy *Vedas*. Viśvakarmā had a son named Vṛtrāsura, who was very well known and powerful. How was it that he had been slain by the high-souled Indra? Viśvakarmā was a powerful Brāhmaṇa and belonged to the gods' party; his son was stronger. How was it that he had been killed by Indra?

The Devas are born of the *sāttvik* qualities; men are born from the *rājasik* qualities; and all the birds, etc., are born of the *tāmasik* qualities. This is the opinion of the Paṇḍitas, versed in the *Purāṇas* and *āgamas*. But in this act of slaying Vṛtrāsura, a great contradiction arises; for the powerful Vṛtra was killed merely under a pretext by Indra, the performer of the hundred sacrifices, and endowed with *sāttvik* qualities. And Indra was prompted to do so by Viṣṇu, the head of those who possess *sāttvik* qualities; while Viṣṇu himself entered in disguise into the thunderbolt so that he could kill Vṛtra. The powerful Vṛtra entered into a treaty and kept himself peaceful when Indra and Viṣṇu violated truth and treacherously killed him by *jalaphena* (watery foams). O Sūta! The great wonder is this: That Indra and Viṣṇu turned out so bold as to forsake the truth. This, then, is therefore very clear that the high-souled persons sometimes become deluded and act sinfully. The heads of the Devas act very wrongly; they are reckoned as polite simply because they observe the mere outward forms of good conduct as approved by the *śāstras*. How can the mere observance of outward forms constitute politeness? Had Indra, who killed in disguise Vṛtra relying on his words, to suffer any punishment for the sin that he incurred in killing a

Brāhmaṇa? It was told by you before that Vṛtra had been slain by the Devī Bhagavatī; but the general belief is that Indra killed him. Our minds are puzzled on this point; so please clear our doubts."

13-14. Sūta said: "O Munis! Hear the incident of the killing of Vṛtrāsura and the punishment that Indra had to suffer due to his sin of *brahMahātyā*—killing a Brāhmaṇa. This question was asked by the King Parīkṣit and replied by Vyāsa, the son of Satyavatī. I will tell you what Vyāsa had told before."

15-18. Janamejaya asked: "O Best of Munis! How was it that in former days Indra, endowed with the *sāttvik* qualities, killed Vṛtrāsura with the aid of Viṣṇu? And how and why was it that he was killed again by the Goddess Bhagavatī? O Lord of Munis! How could one body be killed twice? Our curiosity has been excited to hear the truth. What man is there that does not like to hear any more of the glorious deeds of the high-souled persons? Kindly narrate to us the slaying of Vṛtra by Devī Bhagavatī."

19-26. Vyāsa said: "O King! You are blessed, since your taste to hear the *Purāṇas* has grown so much; the Devas even get their thirst for drinking nectar; but when quenched, they do not like to drink any more. O King! Your name and fame are widely spread. Your *bhakti* (devotion) to the *Purāṇas* is growing more and more daily. A speaker gets very much delighted when his audience hears him with undivided attention.

O Lord of the earth! The fight between Vṛtra and Vāsava that occurred in days of yore is famous in the passages of the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas;* as well as the suffering that Indra had to encounter as his punishment when he had killed the innocent son of Viśvakarmā. O King! The Munis, who fear sin very much, yet commit blameable acts under the influence of Māyā; then what wonder is there that Viṣṇu and Indra would kill Triśirā and Vṛtra merely under a plea.

When even Viṣṇu, the incarnation of *sāttvik* qualities, gets deluded by Māyā and kills the Daityas deceitfully, then how can you expect any other man to mentally conquer Mahā-Māyā Bhavāni, Who deludes all the beings!

O King! It is under the compulsion of this Māyā that Bhagavān, the Infinite, the friend of Nara-Nārāyaṇa, takes incarnations in thousands of *yugas* in this *saṁsāra* as Matsya (fish), etc., and does deeds sometimes lawful and sometimes unlawful. The Devas and men, being confounded by Māyā, become upset and disordered and say 'this body, wealth, house, sons, wife and relatives are all mine' and being thus deluded, do sometimes virtuous and sometimes sinful deeds. O King! There is not even one being on the surface of this earth, though he may be well versed in finding out cause and effect, the knowledge of the high and low, who is free from this great delusion; he is from the very beginning tied up by the three *guṇas* of this Māyā and remains under Her control.

27-35. This explains that Viṣṇu and Indra both were deluded by Māyā and engaged in fulfilling their own selfish ends. They killed Vritrāśūra under a pretext. O King! Hear! I am now describing to you the cause of enmity between lndra and Vṛtra. The Prajāpati Viśvakarmā was the great arcitect of the Gods. He was skilled, he was superior amongst the gods, a great ascetic and endeared by the Brāhmaṇas. He had enmity with Indra; and out of this enmity he created a very beautiful son, named Triśiraska Viśvarūpa. That son had three faces very beautiful and lovely. Viśvarūpa performed three different functions with his three different faces; with one, he used to study the *Vedas*, with the second he used to drink nectar (wine), and with the third he used to see simultaneously all the directions. Triśirā renounced the pleasures of the world and began to practice a hard *tapasyā;* he became a great ascetic, gentle, restrained in his passions and entirely devoted to his religion. He practiced *panchāgṇi-sādhana* in the summer season, tying his feet upwards on the branch of a tree with his head downwards; he remained in dew in the cold season, under water in the winter season. Thus he abstained from food, conquered himself and,

forsaking all the worldly connections, practiced a very hard *tapasyā;* very difficult, indeed, for those who are of dull intellects.

36-49. Indra became very sad and dispirited to see him practice such a *tapasyā* and thought of the means so that he might not acquire his Indraship. The Pākasāśana Indra remained always very anxious see the energetic penance practiced by that ascetic of unbounded glory and his steady attachment towards it. He thought thus: 'This Triśirā is becoming stronger day-by-day by his penance, so he will kill me. The wise never look an enemy with indifference whose strength daily becomes greater and greater. It is now my urgent duty to invent means how to baffle his *tapasyā.* Lust is the great enemy of asceticism; the practice of devout austerities is destroyed completely by lust; so I must try this very day how the Muni becomes attached to worldly lust and enjoyments.'

The intelligent Indra, thinking thus, called the Apsarās Urvaśī, Menakā, Rambhā, Ghritāchī and Tilottamā, and others proud of their beauty so that they might seduce Triśirā, the son of Viśvakarmā. Indra said: 'O Apsarās! I have now got a very grave task to fulfil; all of you help me in this respect. A great enemy of mine, difficult to conquer, is practicing penance with his self-control. Start at once with your dress suited to various amorous gestures, and try hard to seduce him. Be all well with you; seduce him and remove the fever of my heart. O Apsarās! What more shall I say, I am restless since I have heard of his strength performing such hard austerities. O weak ones ! That powerful ascetic may acquire my place and thus dispossess me; this fear has possessed me. Therefore destroy my fear as quickly as possible. This is the task now given to you; get united and do this good to me.'

The Apsarās, hearing him, bowed down and said: 'O Lord of the Devas! Do not be afraid! We will try our best to seduce him. O highly lustrous one! For the enticing away of the Muni, we will do all the things—dancing, music and other amorous gestures and practices—that will discard your fear. O King of the Gods! We will unsettle the mind of the Muni by our side

glances and passionate gestures and postures, delude and bind him, and then bring him under our control.'

50-60. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus saying, the Apsarās went to Triśirā and began to exhibit various amorous gestures and postures as stated in the *Kāma-śāstra*. They began to sing sometimes, sometimes to dance in tune with musical measures before the Muni. In short, they practiced various amorous gestures to entice him away. But that ascetic, blazing with the fire of *tapas*, did not notice even the Apsarās' various attempts; rather he kept all his senses under the control and remained like a deaf, dumb, and blind man. In that lovely hermitage of the Muni, the Apsarās sang and danced ravishingly, and remained a few days there. But when they saw that the Muni Triśirā did not swerve a bit from his meditative posture they returned tired and distressed to Indra and all very fearful, began to address Indra with folded hands: 'O King! We tried our best and we could not in any way make the Muni unsteady, very hard to surmount. O Pākaśasana! Please invent other means; we could not make the self-controlled Muni move away an inch from his position; it is our good luck that that high-souled Muni, an incarnate of blazing fire has not cursed us!' Then dismissing the Apsarās, the evil-minded and dull Indra began to devī se means, though totally unlawful, how to kill that good Muni. O King! That Indra abandoned all shame, and fear of sin and ultimately came to a highly blameable and sinful conclusion how to kill him.

Here ends the First Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on Triśirā's austerities in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam the Mahā-Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter II—the Birth of Vṛtrāsura

1-11. Vyāsa said: "The extremely covetous Indra then mounted his Airāvata elephant and determined to kill the Muni. He went to him and saw him immersed in deep *samādhi*, firmly seated in his postur with his speech controlled. At that time, a halo of light emanated from his body and he looked like a second Sun and a blazing fire. Indra became very sad and

dejected when he saw that. Indra then thought within himself thus: 'Oh! Can I slay this Muni, free from any vicious inclinations, and endowed with the power of *tapas*, blazing like a fire? This is quite against *dharma*. But, alas! He wants to usurp my position; then how can I neglect such an enemy?' Thus cogitating, Indra hurled at the Muni his swift going, infallible thunderbolt, the Muni remaining engaged in his penance and shining like the Sun and Moon. The ascetic, struck thus, fell on the ground and died like a mountain peak struck by thunder falling on the ground, presenting a wondrous sight. Indra became very glad when he killed the Muni; but the other Munis then cried aloud: 'Oh! We are killed! Alas! What a crime has Indra committed today! Oh! The vicious Indra has killed today this jewel amongst the Munis without any offense! Let, then, this sinner reap the fruits of his sinful act without any delay.'

Indra then went back soon to his own abode; on the other hand, the high-souled Muni, though killed, looked as if he were still living by the luster of his own body. Indra, then, seeing him lying like a living man thought that the Muni might recover and so became very sad. While he was thus arguing in his mind, he saw before him a woodcutter named Takṣa and began to speak to him for his own selfish ends thus 'O Artisan! Cut all the heads of this Muni and keep my word; this highly lustrous Muni is looking as if alive; therefore if you sever his heads, he cannot live.' Takṣa then cursed him and spoke thus.

12-14. 'O King of the Devas! The neck of this Muni is very big and therefore cannot be severed; my axe is not at all fit for this work . Specially I cannot do such a blameable act. You have done a very heinous crime, quite against the law of good persons; I fear sin; I will not be able to cut the heads of a dead man. This Muni is lying dead; what use is there in severing his head again? O Pākaśāsana, killer of the demon Pāka! Why do you fear in this?'

15. Indra said: 'O Artisan! This Muni is my dire enemy. Life seems to be still lingering in his body; his body is still lustrous, I fear if the Muni be alive again!'

16. Takṣa told: 'Do you not feel shame in doing this heinous crime, when you know everything? Do you not fear God for the crime of killing a Brāhmaṇa?'

17. Indra said: 'I will make *prāyaścitta* (penance) afterwards for washing away my sins; but my duty at present is to kill my enemy. O fortunate one! The wise men, clever in polity, say that enemies must be killed by any excuse whatsoever.'

18. Takṣa then replied: "O Maghavan! You are doing this sinful deed out of your avarice; but, O Lord! I have no cause whatsoever; how then without any cause, can I engage myself in such a vicious act?'

19-20. Indra said: 'O Takṣa! I will allot a share to you wherever there will be a sacrifice. The human beings will invariably offer to you the head of the animal killed at any sacrifice. Now cut his head according to this rule.'

21-42. Vyāsa said: "O King! That Takṣa became very glad when he heard thus from Indra and struck off the heads of the Muni with his very strong axe. O powerful King! When the three heads, thus severed, fell to the ground, thousands and thousands of birds came out of those heads in quick succession. The three groups of birds Kalavinkas, Tittiris and Kapinjalas came out very rapidly from the three heads in due succession. The Kapinjala birds came out of that mouth that used to chant the *Vedas* and used to drink *soma;* the Tittiri birds came out of that mouth that used to see all the quarters as if it drank them; and the Kalavinka birds came out of that face that used to drink wine. Indra became very glad to see the birds thus coming out of his mouths and went back at once to his Heavens. O King! No sooner Indra went back, than Takṣa came back to his own house and felt himself very pleased to receive his share of sacrificial things. On returning to his home, Indra thought that he had done his duty in slaying his powerful enemy. It did not pass in his mind that he had committed the *brahmahatyā* sin—that he had killed a Brāhmaṇa.

When Viśvakarmā heard that his virtuous son had been killed, he became very angry in his mind and said, "As Indra has killed my qualified son engaged in asceticism without any offense, I will create another son to kill Indra. Let the Devas see the strength and power of *tapasyā* and let Indra, too, reap the far-reaching effects of his own *karma*.' Thus saying, Viśvakarmā distressed with anger, offered oblations in the sacrificial Fire, reciting *mantras* from the *Atharva-Veda*, with the object of producing a son.

When *homa* was performed for eight nights consecutively, a man quickly came out of that burning fire, as if he was the incarnation of Fire itself. Seeing the lustrous son before him, come out of the fire and endowed with power and energy, Viśvakarmā said 'O Indra's enemy! Grow by my power of asceticism.' When Viśvakarmā spoke these words, burning with anger, that brilliant fiery son began to grow, towering high above the Heavens. Within a moment that man looked a second God of Death, appeared like a mountain and shone like the God Himself.

Then he spoke to his own father Viśvakarmā, who was very distressed 'O Father! Give my name. Pray, what use can I be to you? Why do you look so aggrieved and anxious; please explain to me all the causes. I make a firm vow today that will remove the cause of your sorrow. Father ! Of what avail is that to his father when he is not able to remove his sorrows! O Father! Shall I drink the ocean or crumble the mountains to dust? or shall I obstruct the passage of the rising Sun or shall I kill Indra, Yama or the other host of Devas, or shall I root out the earth and throw it with all beings into the ocean?'

43-53. O King! Hearing thus the sweet words of his son, Viśvakarmā gladly told his mountain-like son, 'O my Son! You are capable to save me from troubles (*vṛjina*) hence you are named Vṛtra. O highly fortunate one! Your brother, named Triśirā was a great ascetic; his three faces were all very strong. He was thoroughly conversant with the *Vedas* and *Vedāṅgas,* and well versed in all the other knowledges. He remained always engaged in practicing asceticism, surprising to the three worlds. Indra killed my qualified son with his thunderbolt; that wicked soul severed his three

heads without any offense. Therefore, O best of beings! Kill that vicious, shameless, deceitful, wicked Indra guilty of the sin of *brahmahatyā*.'

O King! Thus saying, Viśvakarmā very much confounded with the breavement of his son, created various divine weapons. He prepared weapons specially suited to kill Indra, the best axes, tridents, clubs, *Śaktis*, *tomaras* and bows made of horns and arrows, *parighas, pattiśas*, divine discus-like *sudarśan-cakra*, divine inexhaustible arrow cases with arrows, nice *kavaca*, a very substantial air-like swift-going chariot looking like a cloud and capable to carry great loads; all these he created and gave over to his son. O King! Viśvakarmā, the best of arcitects, excited by anger, made ready all the equipment necessary for war and gave them to his son Vṛtrāsura and sent him to kill Indra."

Here ends the Second Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the birth of Vṛtrāsura in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter III—Vṛtra's Tapasyā

1-3. Vyāsa said: "O King! Having the *svastyāyana* ceremony to secure welfare performed by the Brāhmaṇas versed in the *Vedas*, the powerful Vṛtra mounted on his chariot and started to kill Indra, the King of the Gods. The Dānavas that were previously defeated by the Devas now knowing Vṛtrāsura to be powerful, came up to him to serve his cause. The messengers of Indra, when they saw him ready for battle, hurriedly came to Indra and informed him all about his doings and other matters connected with it.

4-7. The messengers said: 'O Lord! Viśvakarmā, having been very much grieved on his son being slain, got very angry and by *abhicāra* process (an incantation with a design to injure or magic spells or charms used for a malevolent purpose) has created a son in order to kill you. That indomitable Vṛtrāsura is now your powerful enemy; mounting his chariot he is coming here to fight with you, surrounded by other Asuras. O highly fortunate one! This enemy of yours is as high as the mountain Meru; he is

now coming hurriedly to you, making a terrible noise; guard yourself carefully.'

O King! While Indra was hearing the messengers, the Devas came there panic-stricken and terrified and said:

8-16. The Gaṇas said: 'O Lord of the Suras! Ominous signs are being seen in the houses of the Gods; the birds are making very inauspicious sounds, foreboding a great calamity. Crows, vultures, herons, falcons and other ugly inauspicious birds are crying and making hoarse sounds on the tops of houses. Other birds are making incessantly harsh sounds like 'chichi koochy'. The carriers of the several Devas are weeping and shedding tears always. O highly fortunate one! On the tops of houses are heard very loud and very dreadful sounds of the crying Rākṣasīs at dead of night. O giver of honor! The flags on the chariots are falling to the ground without any trace of wind. Thus ominous signs are being visible on earth and in the air.

O King of the Devas! Ugly-faced women wearing black clothes are roaming from house to house and always repeating "Leave the house, and go away at once." The Deva women while sleeping in their own temples are seeing in their dreams terrible Rākṣasīs, coming to them, cutting away their hairs on their heads and frightening them. O Indra of the Devas! Inauspicious signs like these, earthquakes and the falling of the meteors are taking place. The jackals come in the courtyard of houses at night and yell horrible heartrending sounds. Lizards are moving always in the rooms, and the several limbs of our bodies are shaking, thus making very inauspicious signs.'

17. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing their words, Indra became very anxious and called Bṛhaspati, the Deva *guru*, and asked him:

18-20. Indra said: 'O Brāhmaṇa! Very inauspicious signs are visible; dreadful winds are blowing and stars are falling from the skies. What are all these? O intelligent one! You are very wise, versed in the *śastras* and the *guru* of the Devas; you are omniscient and know very well how to remedy

the evils. Therefore perform the rites by which enemies can be killed; do such as our miseries be all averted.'

21-31. Bṛhaspati said: "O Thousand-eyed! What shall I do? You have committed a heinous crime; you killed that innocent Muni and so you have earned a very bad *karmik* effect. Very violent sins and good deeds produce their effects very quickly. It is, therefore, highly incumbent on those who desire their own welfare to take up any work with great discretion. It is never advisible to do any action that leads to tormenting others. Never do they find happiness who give pains to others.

O Indra! You have committed *brahmahatyā* under the influence of greed and delusion; now suddenly has appeared the fruit of that act. O King of the Suras! This Vṛtrāsura is born invulnerable to all the Devas. That powerful indomitable Asura chief is now coming, mounted on a chariot, to kill you, surrounded by the other Dānavas and taking with him the Viśvakarmā-made divine arms and weapons equal to your thunderbolt. He is coming like a second Kāla, as it were, to destroy the whole Universe. There is none in this *triloka* capable to kill him; and his death will not also take place.'

While Bṛhaspati was thus speaking, a great tumultuous uproar rose at once. The Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Yakṣas, Munis and other immortals began to fly away from their quarters. Indra seeing the Devas flying away became very anxious, and gave orders that all subservient to him must be ready at once for battle: "Go and call the Vasus, the Rudras, the twin Aśvins, the Ādityas, Pūsā, Bhaga, Vāyu, Kuvera, Varuṇa, Yama and the other Devas to come here at once. The enemy is well nigh; so let all the Devas come on their *vimānas* quickly."

32-44. Thus ordering, Indra mounted on the Airāvata elephant and taking the Sura-*guru* in front started from his own temple. The other Devas mounted on their respective carriers and firmly resolved to fight, started with all their arms and weapons. On the other hand, Vṛtrāsura surrounded by the Demons came up to the beautiful mountain, adorned with trees, on the north side of the Mānasarovara Lake. Indra, too, came there with

Bṛhaspati in front and attended by all the other Devas to that mountain, north of the Mānasa Lake and began to fight. A dreadful fight ensued between Vṛtra and Indra with clubs, swords, *parighas*, *pāśas*, arrows, *Śaktis*, *parsus* and other weapons. The terrible fight lasted for full one hundred human years, terrifying to the self-controlled Ṛṣis and all the human beings. Varuṇa first turned his back; then Vāyu, then Yama, the Sun and Moon, and then Indra fled from the battlefield.

Seeing Indra and the other Devas flying away, Vṛtrāsura came to the hermitage and there bowed down to his father who looked very glad; and he said: O Father! 'I have carried out your orders; Indra and all the other Devas are defeated in the battle; as elephants and deer fly away seeing a lion, so the Devas all fled away to their respective abodes. I have taken the Airāvata, the best of elephants, away from Indra who fled away on foot. O Bhagavan! I have brought the elephant here. Kindly accept it. O Father! It is not advisable to kill a man who is terrified, therefore I did not kill them. Now kindly order anything else that I may fulfil your desires. All the Devas fled away from the battlefield, very much tired and terrified; and what more to say than this that Indra too fled, leaving his elephant on the field.'

45-54. Vyāsa said: "O King! Viśvakarmā became very glad to hear his son's words and said: 'Today I can rightly say that I have got my son and that my life is successful. O son! Today you have sanctified me; my cares and worries are abated; my mind is also calm to see your wonderful prowess. O child! Now hear attentively what I say. O highly intelligent one! Now carefully sit in your steady posture (*sthirāsana*) and practice *tapasyā*. Never trust anybody; Indra is now your enemy, ever ready to find your faults, and clever in sowing dissensions between you and your well-wishers.

O Son! *Tapasyā* is not an ordinary thing; Lakṣmī (prosperity) is obtained thereby; excellent kingdoms, increase of vigor and victories in battles are obtained. Therefore worship Hiraṇyagarbha and get excellent boons from him; then kill this vicious Indra, guilty of the sin of *brahmahatyā*. Worship the auspicious Creator calmly and carefully. The four-faced Brahmā then will be pleased and grant you your desired boon. First please the Creator of

indomitable prowess, from whose womb has sprung all this Universe, and get immortality from Him. Then kill that guilty Indra, my enemy. O Son! My feeling of enmity due to the killing of my son reigns always in my mind; I cannot go to sleep peacefully nor do I get peace in any way. The vicious Indra killed my son; O Vṛtra! What more shall I say to you; I am merged in the ocean of sorrows; save me.'

55-60. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus hearing his father's words, Vṛtrāsura became inflamed with anger and getting his permission, set out gladly to practice *tapasyā*. He then went to the Gandhamādan mountain, performed his bath in the holy and auspicious river Mandākinī, and, preparing a *sthirāsana*, took his seat on the *kuśā* grass to practice the *tapasyā*. He left off gradually taking his food, then subsisted on water only and remained engaged in *yoga;* and seated in *sthirāsana* meditated incessantly on Prajāpati, the creator of this Universe.

Indra, on the other hand, knowing Vṛtrāsura engaged in *tapasyā* became very anxious and sent to him Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Pannagas, Kinnaras, Vidyādharas, Apsarās and other Deva messengers, all of unbounded vigor to create obstacles in his austerities. These Gandharvas and other Deva Yonis, expert in exercising magical spells, tried many ways and means and various gestures and postures to create disturbances in his penance; but that great ascetic Vṛtra, the son of Viśvakarmā did not swerve a bit from his meditative state.

Here ends the Third Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the defeat of the Deva army and on Vṛtra's tapasyā in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IV— Vṛtra defeats the Devas

1-17. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Suras that wanted to create hindrance in Vṛtra's *tapasyā*, seeing him firmly resolved, became disappointed in the fulfilment of their objects and returned to their own abodes. Thus full one hundred years passed away. The four-faced Brahmā, the Grandsire of the

lokas, came there mounted on his carrier the Swan, and said: 'O Vṛtra! Be happy; now quit your meditation and ask a boon; I will grant you the boon that you choose. O child! Your body has become very lean and thin through your penance. I am now very pleased to see your this very hard *tapasyā*. Welfare be to you. Now ask the boon that you desire.'

Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the clearly distinct nectar-like sweet words of the creator Brahmā, Vṛtra shed tears of joy and suddenly stood up. And going to him, bowed down gladly before His feet, and, with folded hands, spoke to Him, who is desirous to grant him boons, in a tremulous voice: 'O Lord! Today I have been fortunate to see Thee who art generally seen with great difficulty; and I have acquired thus the posts of all the Devas; O lotus-seated one! I have got an insatiable desire burning within me. Thou art omniscient, Thou knowest everything; still I am speaking out my mind. O Lord! Grant that my death does not occur with iron, wood, dry or wet substances or with bamboos or any other weapons, and let my strength and valor be increased very much in the battle; for then, I will be unconquerable by all the Devas with all their armies.'

Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus prayed to, Brahmā said to him smiling: 'O child! get up; I grant that your desired boon will always be fulfilled; now go to your own place. Your death won't occur with dry or wet substances or with stones or wood. I say this truly unto you.' Thus granting the boon, Brahmā went to his Brahmaloka. Vṛtra, too, became very glad on receiving his desired object, and returned to his own abode. The highly intelligent Vṛtra informed the father about the boon granted to him; Viśvakarmā became very glad to hear it.

'O highly fortunate one! Let all bliss and good fortune come unto you; kill Indra, my greatest enemy. Go and kill the murderer of my son Triśirā, the vicious Indra, and return to me. Be victorious in the battle. Become the Lord of all the Devas and remove my mental agony due to the killing of my son. A son becomes then really a son when he obeys the commands of his father and when he feeds plentifully a good many people on the *śrāddha* day after his father's death, and when he offers *piṇḍa* at Gayā. Therefore, O

son! Keep my words and try to remove my sorrows. Know this as certain that Triśirā never vanishes from my mind. Triśirā was very truthful, amiable and good-natured; he was an ascetic and foremost amongst the Vedic scholars. The wicked Indra killed my dear son without any offense.'

18-33. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing the father's words, that extremely indomitable Vṛtrāsura mounted on his chariot and quickly got out of his father's house. The proud Asura then marched to the battle, accompanied by his vast army, to the sounding of the conchshells and war drums. Vṛtra, versed in politics and morals, exhorted his soldiers before marching and said: 'Today we will kill Indra and possess the kingdom of the immortals, freed of all enemies.' O King! Thus, accompanied by his soldiers, and raising a tremendous war-cry terrifying to the Devas, the Asura set out for battle. O Bhārata! The King of the Devas, knowing that the Asura is quite at hand, became overwhelmed with terror and ordered at once the soldiers to be ready for the battle and called quickly all the Lokapālas and sent them all for the battle. The highly lustrous Indra, the tormentor of the foes, arrayed his troops in order according to *gṛdhra-vyūha,* the method in which the vultures arrange themselves while flying, and stayed there.

On the other hand Vṛtra, the slayer of enemies, dashed unto that place with all swiftness. A dreadful fight then ensued between the Devas and Dānavas; the two parties, desirous to get victory over the other, fought awfully hard. When the blaze of the battle fire shone to a very high pitch, the Devas dropped with sorrow while the Asuras became excited with joy. The Devas and Dānavas struck each other with *tomaras*, *bhindipālas*, axes, *paraśus*, *pattiśas* and various other weapons. When the dreadful battle rose to a high pitch causing horripilation, Vṛtra became very angry and suddenly caught hold of Indra and denuding him of all clothes and armors swallowed him; he, then, remembering his former enmity, became very glad and stayed there. When Indra was thus devoured by Vṛtra, the Devas were overwhelmed with terror and cried out frequently, with great distress: 'O Indra! O Indra!'

All the Devas became very dejected and grieved in their hearts to see Indra denuded of his armor and clothes in the belly of Vṛtra and bowed down to Bṛhaspati and said: 'O Indra of the Brāhmaṇas! You are our best *guru;* what are we to do now? Though the gods tried their best to save Indra, still Vṛtra has devoured him. We are all powerless, what can we do without Indra? O Lord! Perform quickly magic spells—the *abhichāra* process—which will lead to our Indra's liberation.'

34. Bṛhaspati said: 'O Suras! The king of the gods is swallowed by Vṛtra, he has been quite disabled; but Indra is living in his bowels; attempt therefore must be made that he comes out while living.'

35-54. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Devas became very anxious to see Indra in that plight and took all the ways and means carefully how he might be freed. Then they created a state tending to cause yawning, very powerful and irresistible and calculated to destroy one's enemy. Vṛtrāsura then yawned and his mouth got widely opened and extended. In the meanwhile Indra, the destroyer of one's enemies' strength, contracted all his limbs and came out of the expanded mouth of the Asura and fell down. Since that time, this state of yawning has become prevalent amongst the beings. The Devas were all glad to see Indra thus come out. When Indra thus got out, he fought again with Vṛtra for *ajuta* (10,000 years). The fight was very dreadful, causing horripilation. On one side all the Devas joined in the battle; on the other side, the pre-eminently powerful Vṛtra, the son of Viśvakarmā fought.

While Vṛtrāsura got more and more energy in the battle, Indra gradually dwindled and was at last defeated. Indra became very much grieved when he found himself defeated; the Devas also were very dejected to see this. Indra and the other Devas quit the battlefield and fled away. Vṛtrāsura then quickly arrived and occupied the Heavens. Vṛtra began to enjoy by force the Heavenly gardens and took the Airāvata elephant. O King! The Asura, the son of Tvaṣṭā, took away all *vimānas*, the self-moving chariots of gods, Uccaiḥśravā, the best of horses, the heavenly cow, the giver of desires, the Pārijāta tree, the Apsarās, and all other jewels of the Heavens.

The Devas, on the other hand, deprived of their shares in sacrifices and driven away from their Heavens, suffered very much. Vṛtrāsura became puffed up with vanity when he got possession of the Heavens. Viśvakarmā, too, became very happy at that time and began to enjoy pleasures along with his son. O Bhārata! The Devas then united with the Munis and began to consult about their own welfare.

Then the Devas took Indra with them and went to Mahādeva in Mount Kailāśa, bowed down to His feet very humbly and, with folded hands, spoke thus: 'O Deva of the Devas! O Mahādeva! Thou art the Maheśvara and the unbounded ocean of mercy! We are defeated by Vṛtrāsura and we are very much terrified. Save us, O Śambhu! Thou doest good to all the beings; dost thou tell us therefore truly what are we to do now, when that powerful Dānava has dispossessed us of our Heavens? O Maheśa! Now dislodged, where are we to go? We are not finding any remedy by which our miseries can be destroyed. O Bhūta Bhāvana! We are very much pained; help us; O merciful One! That Vṛtrāsura has become intoxicated with vanity due to his being granted the boon. Therefore destroy him.'

55-57. Śaṅkara said: 'O Devas! We will keep Brahmā in the front and let all of us go to the residence of Hari and there consult with Him how to destroy this unruly Vṛtra. Janārdana Vāsudeva is fully capable to do all actions. He is powerful, knower of pretexts, highly intelligent, an ocean of mercy, and fit to be asked by all for protection. Without Him, the Deva of the Devas, no success is possible in any action. Therefore all of us ought to go there for the success in our undertaking.'

58-62. Vyasa said: "O King! Thus settling their plan of action, Indra and other Devas took Śaṅkara and Brahmā with them and went to the abode of Hari, who protects all and is gracious to His devotees. Then they began to chant *puruṣa-sūkta* hymns to Him, and thus they praised the God Hari, the *guru* of this Universe. The Janārdan Hari, the Lord of Kāmalā, then appeared before them and after showing His respect, addressed them thus: O Lord of the several *lokas!* What have brought you all together with

Brahmā and Śaṅkara hither? O best of Suras! Please tell Me the reason of your coming here.'

Vyasa said: "O King! Thus hearing Hari's words, the Devas could not reply anything; rather almost all of them remained with an anxious look with their hands folded, overwhelmed with cares."

Here ends the Fourth Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the defeat of the Devas by Vṛtra in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter V—Praising the Devī

1-5. Vyāsa said: "O King! Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Lakṣmī and Knower of the essences of all subjects, seeing the Devas extremely attached to him and anxious, spoke to them thus: 'O Suras! Why have you kept silent? Tell Me why you have all come—let it be good or bad, tell Me; I will try to remove your miseries.'

The Devas said: 'O Lord! Is there anything unknown to You in this *triloki?* You know everything; why then art Thou asking us again and again? In ancient times You in your Dwarf incarnation overspread the three worlds by Your three feet and thus bound the King Bali in his own premises, and gave over the sovereignty over the Devas to Indra. O All-Pervading One! It is You who deluded the Daityas and procured nectar for the Devas, and it is You who sent them to the house of Death. Therefore, O Lord! You are the one and only one that is capable in warding off all the evils that befall on the Devas.'

6-31. Thus hearing the Devas' words, Viṣṇu said: 'O Suras! You need not fear; I know one remedy, approved by all, by which that Daitya might be killed so that you would be happy. I am now giving it out to you. Your welfare, your benefit must be looked at by Me whether by the exercise of my intelligence or by using My prowess, My wealth, by pretext or by any other means whatsoever. Four means—conciliation, gifts, sowing discord

or punishment—are mentioned by the wise statesmen to be applied to friends and specially to the enemies. Brahmā was worshipped by Vṛtra with severe austerities and He granted boons and it is due to the influence of that favor that this Asura has become indomitable. The more so that Viśvakarmā created him from the sacrificial fire; it is through all these causes that the Demon Vṛtrāsura, conqueror of the enemies' stronghold, has grown up so very powerful that he can hardly be conquered by any being.

O Suras! First peace must be negotiated with him; then deceive him, otherwise the enemy will be very difficult to conquer. First entice him and bring him under control; then kill him. Now take the Ṛṣis and Gandharvas with you, go where the powerful enemy Vṛtrāsura is residing and make a treaty with him; thus he will be conquered. Swear on oath and accede to the terms he proposes and thus create faith in him; then cultivate friendship with him; lastly, when time will come, kill that powerful enemy.

O Suras! I will also enter, unseen by anybody, into the excellent weapon of Indra, his thunderbolt and will help him in due time. Wait til the period of his longevity expires; otherwise his death will never take place. Now go to that Asura with Gandharvas and Ṛṣis and cunningly cultivate friendship between him and Indra by conciliatory words; when he begins thus to put his confidence, then deceive him. I will enter hiddenly into the strong well-covered thunderbolt. When Indra will come to know that the Demon has put complete faith in him, he will hurl his thunderbolt against him and thus the enemy will be killed, and not otherwise. O Lord of the Devas! Do not consider for the present the act of treachery that you will commit: take My help and kill that wicked Demon with your thunderbolt. To practice hypocrisy with an hypocrite is not considered a sin; specially no powerful enemy can be killed only by the well-known rules applicable to warriors, without any deceit. I also deceived Bali, with my dwarf body and again I deceived all the Demons by showing myself as a beautiful woman; therefore to practice deceit with a strong deceitful enemy is never considered a sin. Know this.

O Devas! Now you all conjointly worship the Devī Bhagavatī with *mantras* and prayers and take Her shelter; the Yoga-Māyā, then, will help you. We too worship that Devī, the Highest Prakṛti, the Incarnation of pure *sattva-guṇa*, Who grants success, bestows us all our desires, Who is Herself the object of desires, and Who is never realized by any except by the *yogīs*, self-controlled pure men. Indra, too, will certainly be able to kill his enemy in battle if he worships Her; for Mahā-Māyā, the Creatrix of Delusion, will, when worshipped, delude that Demon. Thus deluded by Her Māyā, Vṛtrāsura will easily be killed by him; there is no doubt about this.

What more do you want than this that everything will be successfully accomplished when the Devī Ambikā is propitiated and gets well pleased? She regulates the hearts of all and is the Cause of all causes. Without Her worship no one's desires can be expected to be accomplished. Therefore, O best of Suras! Worship the Universal Mother, the Prakṛti Devī with greatest devotion and purity for the destruction of your enemy. See! In days of yore, I fought for five thousand years, dreadfully with the two Demons Madhu and Kaitabha and then killed them. I worshipped, then, Mahā-Māyā, the Highest Prakṛti; She was thus pleased and deluded the two Asuras; thus the two powerful Asuras puffed up with vanity were deluded and I could kill those terrible Daityas under a pretext. Therefore, O Suras! You, too, worship that Highest Prakṛti with the greatest devotion; She will then surely fulfill your desires.'

32-49. O King! When the intelligent Viṣṇu enlightened thus the Devas, they went to the top of the Mount Sumeru, adorned with the Mandāra trees, and, remaining at a secluded place, recited slowly Her *mantrams.* Thus engaged in asceticism and meditation, they began to chant hymns and praise that Universal Mother, the Holder of the world, the Remover of all world ailings, and the Creatrix, Preservatrix and Destructrix of the world and the Bestower of all desires to Her devotees.

The Devas said: 'O Devī! Be graciously pleased unto us! O Thou, the Destructrix of the afflictions of the distressed! We have taken refuge unto Thy lotus feet. We have been defeated by Vṛtrāsura in battle, and we are

very much oppressed and afflicted. O Thou, the Highest Reality! O Thou, the Mother of the whole Universe! Protect us as a Mother protects her child; we are fallen into this difficulty arising from our enemies. O Mother! Nothing is hidden from Thy knowledge in the three worlds. Why art Thou taking no notice of us, that are being tormented by the Asuras?

O Mother! Thou createst, preservest, and destroyest the three worlds; Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa are created by Thy mere will and are doing all Thy work. Mother! They are not independent; by the contraction of Thy eyebrows, they are directed and enjoy all the pleasures. The Mother protects her sons afflicted with various difficulties and dangers, even when they are found guilty of various offenses. It is Thou that hast made this rule; then why, O Merciful! art Thou not protecting us, who are quite innocent and whom Thou dost know as having taken refuge unto Thy lotus feet?

O Devī! If Thou thinkest that we forget Thee, being too much attracted by the enjoyments that Thou hast been pleased to confer unto us, and therefore we are proper not to be looked upon with Thy merciful eyes, we would say that this is quite true; but, O Mother! nowhere is seen a feeling of a Mother to Her child; we are no doubt, objects of Thy mercy and favor always. Besides there is no fault of us in this matter, O Mother! that we do not worship Thee and become immersed in sensual enjoyments; for Thy creation, Thy *moha* (delusion) is very powerful and deludes us.

O Mother! Thou art naturally Merciful! Knowing these, why art Thou not showing mercy unto us. O Devī! Thou hadst killed before in battle, for our sake, the powerful Daitya Chief Mahiśāsura, very terrible to all the beings. Then why art not Thou, O Mother ! killing this dreadful Vṛtrāsura? O Mother! Thou hadst killed the two brother Daityas, Śumbha and Niśumbha, extraordinarily powerful, and the other Daityas that followed them. O Thou, the embodiment of mercy! similarly destroy now this deceitful strong Vṛtrāsura. O Mother! delude this proud Asura so that he could not maṇifest his power in the least. We are very much troubled by the Asuras and overwhelmed with terror from them; Thou savest us; for

there is no other in the three worlds that can by his own force remove the sorrows and sufferings of the Devas.

O Mother! Though Thou hast shown favor towards Vṛtra, now dost kill him soon, whose nature is cruel and tormenting to others. O Bhavānī! Better dost Thou save him from sin by Thy holy arrows. Otherwise that vicious Asura will surely enter into the hideous Hell. It is for his welfare that Thou oughtest to kill him. Those that had been before enemies of the Gods, Thou didst purify them by weapons in the battlefield and hadst sent them to the Nandana Garden in the Heavens.

O Thou, Mercy personified! was it not that Thou didst not save them from hell? Then why art not Thou killing this Vṛtrāsura? We know this for certain that the Asura is Thy enemy, not Thy servant; for that mischievous soul is giving us trouble. O Mother! How can he be Thy servant and devotee who torments the Devas that are always engaged in worshipping Thy lotus feet? O Mother! How can we perform Thy worship? The flowers and other articles used in worship all are created by Thee; especially we and the *mantras*—in fact, everything is the maṇifestation of Thy power.

Therefore, O Bhavānī! We worship Thee by laying ourselves prostrate on Thy feet. Be'st Thou pleased. Those men are blessed that worship with devotion Thy lotus feet for crossing this ocean of world. O Devī! Those *yogīns* that want final liberation and forsake therefore all attachments, *vikāras* and delusions, even they attain success only when they meditate on Thy lotus feet. Those that are great sacrificers and know best the essence of the *Vedas*, even they when they offer oblations to the sacrifice, utter "Svāhā" that is cheering to the Devas and "Svadhā" very consoling to the *pitṛs;* thus they always think of Thee, for Svāhā and Svadhā are Thy names only.

O Mother! Thou art the retentive power and memory. Thou art beauty, Thou art peace, Thou art *buddhi* (intellect) well known to clarify men's minds; and Thou art the prosperity and wealth of all these three worlds. O

Devī! Those that worship Thee, Thou givest them, out of mercy, those wealth in some way or other.'

50-57. Vyāsa said: 'O King! Thus worshipped by the Devas, the Devī Bhagavatī appeared before them in a very beautiful form, thin, adorned with all ornaments. Her two hands holding a noose and goad, and the other two hands making signs to discard all fear and ready to grant boons; Her loins were very beautiful, girdled with a gold band with small bells pending and making sweet tinkling sounds; Her feet with anklets making sweet sonorous sounds with tiny tinkling bells. Her voice was exceedingly sweet and lovely, Her forehead was adorned with the crescent of the Moon and on Her head was glittering a diadem of jewels, Her lotus-face adorned with sweet soft smiles and with Her three beauteous lotus eyes looking like Indībaras. Her body was of a red color like the Pārijāta flowers and Her limbs were marked with red sandalwood paste. She was dressed in a red attire. The Devilooked well pleased, like an ocean of infinite mercy, wearing complete dress suited to happy interviews, the Creatrix of all this Cosmos, the Highest, the Knower of all, the Directrix of all, and the Great Upholder of all. She looked like an embodiment of the Truth of all *Vedānta* and the Incarnation of eternal Existence, Intelligence and Bliss, the Mahā-Devī Bhagavatī Bhuvaneśvarī. The Devas all bowed down before Her standing in front of them.

The Mother then spoke: 'What business have you got here? Speak to Me.'

58-59. The Devas said: 'O Bhagavatī! Vṛtrāsura is tormenting much the Devas; bewitch him. O Devī! Do such as he can trust the Devas; and impart then strength on our weapons such as he can be killed.'

Vyāsa said: "O King! 'That will be done.' Saying thus, the Devī departed then and there. The Devas became very glad and returned respectively to their abodes.

Here ends the Fifth Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the praising of the Devī by the Devas in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VI—the Slaying of Vṛtrāsura

1-3. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus getting the boons from the Devī, the Devas and the Ṛṣis blazing with their asceticism, all united and consulted with each other; then they went to the excellent *āśrama* of Vṛtra. There they saw Vṛtra in a sitting posture and with his own *tejas,* his fiery spirit as if ready to burn the three worlds and to devour all the Devas. The Ṛṣis then spoke to Vṛtra sweet words full of sentiments for the serving of the Devas' ends, according to the principle of conciliation.

4-23. 'O highly fortunate Vṛtra! Terrific to all the *lokas!* You have now established your dominion in all the places over this whole Universe; but your enmity with Indra is the only cause to interrupt you in your happiness; there is no doubt about this. This enmity has increased much the anxiety of you both and therefore has grown very painful. Neither you nor Indra can go to sleep peacefully, there is always that fear hanging on you both, on account of that enmity. And see! A long while has passed away since the last battle was fought between you two; yet all the Devas, Asuras, men and other subjects are feeling a sense of oppression and pain. In this world happiness is the only thing to be sought for and pain is to be avoided; this is the eternal state of things. Never does that man who practices enmity with another get happiness; this has been ascertained by the wise. It is only those brave warriors, that found taste in warfare, that approve of battles; but the wise that are expert in amorous enjoyments do not like battle as destroying the sensual enjoyments; they do not like fighting with flowers even; what to say with sharpened arrows! In a battle, the victory is doubtful but the shooting of arrows is certain, This world is dependent on Fate—Daiva, dependent on the cosmic Deities or Devas of the Universe, so is victory or defeat. So knowing this, one ought never to fight. Bathing in proper time, taking food and sleeping in fixed times and having a chaste serving wife, these are the means towards happiness in this world. While in warfare, shooting terrible arrows and striking with fierce axes take place; what happiness can there possibly exist? Rather the enemy finds pleasure there. There is a saying that death in battle leads one to

Heaven, but this is merely an enticing statement, inciting one to war. Really it is fruitless. Supposing that happiness comes ultimately to those who pain their bodies by being shot with arrows and who allow their carcasses being devoured by the crows and jackals—then no man, even of dull understanding will like this, what to speak of intelligent persons!

Therefore, O Vṛtra! Let everlasting peace and friendship be established between you and Indra; both of you in that case will derive everlasting peace and happiness. Moreover if the enmity between you terminates from this instant, then we, the ascetics and Gandharvas will no doubt be able to remain in our own respective *āśramas* with great comfort. O powerful hero! Owing to incessant wars between you and Indra, the Munis, Gandharvas, Kinnaras and beings are suffering very much day and night. For the happiness of all peace-loving persons, we Munis, the residents of the forest, earnestly desire that there be formed friendship between you two. We desire that you, Indra and all the *jīvas* get happiness. O Vṛtra! We stand as mediators in this treaty between you and Indra; we will make each party swear an oath, and thus make it conducive to the happiness of both. Indra will now swear an oath before you on the terms that you dictate, and thus will make your heart cheerful. Know this verily that this earth stands on Truth, the sun rises for the sake of Truth, the winds blow all along for Truth and the boundless ocean never oversteps its limit for Truth. Therefore let your friendship be established on Truth. Thus tied together by bonds of friendship let you two sleep, play, make sports in water and sit together happily.'

24-28. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing the Mahārṣi's words, the highly intelligent Vṛtra began to say: 'Ṛṣis! You are possessed with knowledge and many other qualifications and you are ascetics; you are therefore to be respected by me. You are the Munis and therefore you never speak any falsehood; your conduct is good and you practice rites and ceremonies; you are calm, therefore you do not know the causes of pretexts. The intelligent should never cultivate friendship with a knave, licentious person who is void of understanding, an infamous, and a shameless person, specially if

he be an enemy. This vicious Indra is shameless, deceitful, licentious, and the killer of a Brāhmaṇa; therefore no faith can ever be placed on such persons. You are saints and added with all good qualifications; therefore your minds never play in the mischievous thoughts of others; it is because your heart is calm and quiet that you cannot understand the minds of the deceitful and treacherous; therefore you ought never to stand as mediators between any two persons.'

29-32. The Munis said: "O King! All the creatures certainly enjoy the fruits of their *karma*, whether good or bad; how then can persons of perverted intellect obtain peace when they do mischief to others? The treacherous persons certainly go to hell and suffer miseries always. The slayers of Brāhmaṇas and the drunkards may get liberation; but never the faithless and those who go against their friends get off free; these will have to suffer undoubtedly in the hells. Therefore, O knower of all things! Give out clearly what is going on exactly in your mind and the exact terms that you want; and the treaty will be made between you and Indra exactly according to those terms.'

33-34. Vṛtra said: 'O highly fortunate Munis! I can enter into a treaty of peace with Indra only on the condition that Indra with all the other Devas will not kill me in day or in night with any dry or liquid substance or with wood, stone or thunderbolt, and on no other terms.'

35-68. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Ṛṣis then gladly accepted his word,brought Indra there and recited to him the terms of the treaty of peace. Indra then swore an oath before the Munis with Fire as the Witness that he would comply with the terms of the treaty, and was thus freed from his heavy thoughts and felt that he had been rid of a fever. Vṛtra then relied on lndra's words, became his friend and began to live, play and enjoy with him. They felt pleasure by their union and began to roam sometimes in the Nandana Garden, sometimes in the Gandha Mādana, sometimes on the shores of oceans. Vṛtra was very much delighted when they were thus united in friendship; but Indra watched him to find his faults; thus some time passed. A few years passed away after the treaty had been concluded.

And the straightforward Vṛtra began to place very much confidence on Indra; but Indra meditated on the means how to kill him. One day Visvakarmā, knowing that his son Vṛtrāsura placed implicit confidence on Indra, called his son and said: 'O my son Vṛtra! Hear my good words. See, it is never advisable to trust anybody with whom there once has arisen enmity. Indra is your greatest enemy; he always intends evil to you; therefore do not trust him anymore. Indra is never to be trusted; he is always covetous, inimical, rejoicing at others' sufferings, licentious and addicted to others' wives; vicious, deceitful, finding fault with others, always jealous, a juggler, and puffed up with vanity. O child! What more shall I say than this fact that that villain, without fearing sin, easily entered into the womb of his mother and cut the crying child in the womb into seven pieces and then each seventh part again into seven parts, thus altogether into forty-nine parts. Therefore O my son! He is never to be trusted on any account. He who is always addicted to vicious deeds never feels shame in perpetrating again another crime.'

Vyāsa said: "O King! Vṛtra's death time drew nigh; hence he could not take his father's words as auspicious, though he was warned by his father in words full of meaning. One day, in the evening time, at a very inauspicious dreadful moment, Indra saw Vṛtra on the shore of an ocean and began to think of the boon granted by Brahmā to the Asura thus: 'Now this is the terrible evening time; this cannot be called day nor can it be called night, and this demon is also here alone in this solitary place; it is advisable therefore to effect his death by force, there is no doubt about this.' Thus arguing in his mind, Indra remembered the undecaying soul, Hari. Bhagavān, the best of Puruṣas came there unseen by anybody, and entered into the thunderbolt; Indra quickly collected himself to kill Vṛtrāsura; he thought how he could slay this Demon, unconquerable in battle; and if he did not slay his enemy then by deceit, then his enemy would continue to live, and it would be impossible for him to get his own welfare. While he was thus thinking, he saw the foam of the waters of the ocean as big as a mountain; thinking that foam not to be dry nor wet and considering that foam not to be any weapon, he easily took that foam and instantly

remembered with a heartful devotion the Highest Śakti Bhuvaneśvarī. On Her remembrance, the Bhagavatī infused Her part into that foam. And the thunderbolt, instilled with the force of Nārāyaṇa, was also covered by that foam. Indra then hurled the thunderbolt covered with foam on Vṛtra; and the Demon, thus struck, instantly fell down like a mountain. When Vṛtrāsura was thus killed, Indra became very glad; the Ṛṣis began to praise him with various hymns. Indra, then, with all the other Devas worshipped the Devī through Whose Grace the enemy had been killed, and they praised Her with various hymns. The image of the Bhagavatī the Supreme Śakti was built of ruby and installed in the Nandana Garden.

O King! Since then all the Devas used to worship the Devī thrice a day, morning, midday and evening and since then the Śrī Devī became the tutelary deity of the Gods. Indra worshipped then Viṣṇu also, the Highest of the Gods. When the terrible powerful Vṛtrāsura was killed, the auspicious wind began to blow gently; the Devas, Gandharvas, Rākhsasas, and Kinnaras began to roam about with great joy. Vṛtrāsura was deluded by the Māyā of Bhagavatī, and Her force entered into the foam; hence Indra was capable to kill him suddenly, and it is for this reason that the Devī, the Goddess of the world, is known in the three worlds as Vṛtranihantrī, the slayer of Vṛtra. But at the first sight Indra killed him by means of the foam; hence the people say that Vṛtra was killed by Indra.

Here ends the Sixth Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the slaying of Vṛtrāsura in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VII—Indra lives in Disguise

1-16. Vyāsa said: "O King! Now seeing Vṛtra slain, Viṣṇu, the Deva of the Devas, went to Vaikuṇṭha; but with this fear reigning supreme in his mind: that it was He that virtually slew him. Indra too then became afraid of the sin committed by him and returned to his Heavens. The Munis, too, became very anxious and thought what great sin they have committed in

cheating Vṛtrāsura. It is the company of Indra that now made their name 'Munis' as meaningless.

The Munis thought thus: 'Oh! Vṛtra on our words trusted Indra, and we have thus turned out today traitors in company with that traitor Indra. Attachment and affection is the cause of all mischief. Fie on that attachment! It is, as it were, tied by the cord of affection that we had sworn falsely on oath and thus deceived Vṛtra. Those that deliberately guide others to vicious acts, those that advise or incite others to do sinful acts or those that side with the sinners certainly partake of the fruits of the sin committed. Viṣṇu too committed the sin, though he had *sattva-guṇa* preponderance, when he entered into the thunderbolt and thus helped Indra in killing Vṛtra. It seems that henceforth the people, when selfish, won't hesitate to commit any sinful act when they will see that Bhagavān Viṣṇu could have done, in concert with Indra, such a vicious thing. Of the four virtues—*dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa*—*dharma* and *mokṣa* are very rare in the three worlds. *Artha* (wealth) and *kāma* (desires) are everywhere recommended as excellent, and therefore held very dear; *dharma* is now merely in name and is the cause of the vanity of the Paṇḍitas—no one now really practices *dharma* with devotion.'

Thus arguing, the Munis became very much afflicted in their minds and went back to their own respective hermitages, brokenhearted and absent-minded. O Bhārata! Hearing of the death of his son by Indra, Viśvakarmā wept very much and he become disgusted very much with the affairs of the world. He went to the place where lay his son Vṛtra and became pained very much to see him in that state; and he performed his cremation and other funeral obsequies according to the prescribed rules. He then bathed, performed his *tarpaṇam* (peace-offering) and funeral ceremonies due to a person in the first year of his death. Then his heart became afflicted with sorrow, and he cursed the vicious Indra saying that 'As Indra had killed my son, enticing him by falsely swearing on oath, so Indra in his turn would suffer a heavier suffering, to be inflicted by Vidhi (the Great Creator of Universe).'

O King! Thus cursing Indra, Viśvakarmā, very much afflicted due to the loss of his son, went to the top of the Mount Meru and began to practice a hard *tapasyā.”*

17. Janamejaya said: “O Grandsire! First tell me what happiness or pain did Indra derive by killing Vṛtra, the son of Tvaṣṭā?”

18-40. Vyāsa said: “O fortunate One! What are you asking? and what is the nature of your doubt? The fruit of one’s *karma* is certainly to be enjoyed, whether it be auspicious or inauspicious; be he weak or strong; be he a Deva, an Asura or a human being. Everyone in fact, will have to suffer for their *karma*, good or bad, to its full extent, whether it be done a little or too much. See! It was Viṣṇu that gave advice to Indra, entered into his thunderbolt and helped him when Indra was ready to kill Vṛtra; but when there had been Indra’s difficult time, Viṣṇu did not help Indra in any way. Therefore, O King! It is clear that when one’s time is favorable, everybody turns out friends; but when Fate turns adverse, nobody is seen to come forward to help. When Fate is against anybody, one’s father, mother, wife, or brother, servant, friend or one’s own son becomes quite incapable to help him. The man who does good or bad acts suffers for his deeds.

When Vṛtra was killed, everyone went back to their respective homes; but Indra, the Lord of Śachī, became very much deprived of his energy and brilliance due to the sin of killing a Brāhmaṇa; all the Devas then blamed him as a *brāhmaghataka,* the killer of a Brāhmaṇa. They talked further that no other person would have been able to even indulge the idea of killing a Muni who was an intimate friend, and who placed full confidence on him when Indra had sworn on oath that he would be a friend to Vṛtra. O King! Everywhere then there was this gossip in the assemblages of the gods, in their gardens and at the meetings of the Gandharvas, that Indra had deceived Vṛtra who had relied on him on the word of the Munis and then killed him by pretext, and so had done a horrible crime indeed. Indra had now forsaken the eternal proofs of the *Vedas;* and he had become a Bauddha; therefore he could have easily killed Vṛtra. No other person, save Viṣṇu and Indra, could have acted contrary to their word, as clearly

evidenced by the manner in which Vṛtra had been killed. These remarks, similar to those mentioned above, became everywhere current and Indra heard all of them, tending to his own disgrace. O King! Fie on that man's life that is blamed everywhere! Fie on that man whose fame has been marred amongst the people. Such a person becomes laughed at by his enemies, when seen by them on the way.

The Rājarṣi Indradyumna was made to get down from Heaven, though sinless, when his good deeds expired. Why, then, should not vicious persons be made to descend? The king Yayāti had to get down from Heaven for his very little fault and had to pass eighteen *yugas* in the form of a crab. What more can be said than the fact that even Bhagavān Achyuta Hari had to take several incarnations in the wombs of boar, crocodile, etc., out of the curse from a Brāhmaṇa, due to his cutting off the head of the wife of Bhṛgu. Though omnipresent, yet he had to take the appearance of a dwarf and had to beg from the King Bali's palace. What more troubles and miseries than this can be inflicted on those that had sinned viciously.

O ornament of Bharata! Rāmacandra, too, had to experience, due to the curse of Bhṛgu, terrible miseries on the bereavement of Sītā Devī. Similarly Indra, for his sin of killing a Brāhmaṇa, was so much terrified that he could not get his healthy condition though he remained in his own house, endowed with all sorts of prosperity and wealth. Seeing Indra lusterless, knowledge-less, almost void of consciousness, and overwhelmed with fear, his wife Śachī, the daughter of Pulomā, spoke to him thus: 'O Lord! Your dreadful enemy has been killed; why are you then sighing so much, being afflicted with so much terror? O Lord! You have destroyed your enemy; then why are you so much anxious? why are you then so much remorseful and drawing such deep heavy sighs like an ordinary man? I am not seeing any other powerful enemy of yours; then, why do you look so anxious and bowed down with cares, as if you look quite unconscious.'

41-44. Indra said: 'O Devī! True that I have no other powerful enemy, yet I do not find peace nor any happiness. I fear for the sin *brāhmahātyā* in my house. O Devī! This Nandana Garden, the city of Kuvera, the lord of riches,

this nectar forest, the sweet music of the Gandharvas, the beautiful dance of the Apsarās, all these now do not give the least pleasure to me. What more can I say than this that the beautiful lady like you, most beautiful amidst the three worlds, and other beautiful ladies, the heavenly cow, the Mandāra tree (one of the five trees of the celestial region), the Pārijāta tree (the flower tree), the Santāna tree, the Kalpa tree yielding all desires, the Harichhandan (saffron tree) and others cannot give pleasure to me. What to do, where to go, so that I get happiness, O Beloved? This thought makes me uneasy. And so I am not able to get happiness in my own thought.'

45-60. Vyāsa said: "Thus speaking to his most distressed wife, Indra got out of his house and went to the exceedingly beautiful lake, named Manasarovara. Indra there entered into the tubular stalk of the lotus, his body becoming very lean and thin out of fear and sorrow. Nobody could recognize him as he was overpowered by his terrible sin. He then began to behave himself, as regards feeding and enjoying, like a snake; he became ovewhelmed with thought, helpless, and his organs were out of order. He remained hidden in the water.

When Indra, the king of the Devas, thus fled away out of the fear of his *brāhmahātyā* sin, the other Devas became very anxious; everywhere various evil signs maṇifested themselves. The Ṛṣis, Siddhas and Gandharvas were very much panic-stricken, as various disturbances and violent symptoms covered all over the world without any king. Grains began to grow very scanty due to want of rains; the streams were almost dry, and very little water was there in the tanks. In such a state of anarchy, all the inhabitants of the celestial regions, the Devas and Ṛṣis consulted and installed the king Nahusa in the place of Indra. O King! Nahusa, though virtuous, came under the sway of *rajoguṇa*, influenced by lust and thus he got very much addicted to worldly enjoyments. He began to amuse himself in the Garden of Paradise, surrounded by the Apsarās or celestial nymphs. One day he heard of the excellent qualifications of Śachī Devī, the wife of Indra, and desired to acquire her. Then he spoke to the Ṛṣis: 'The Devas and you, united, have installed me in the office of Indra; but why does not the

Indranī (the wife of Indra), come to me so long? If you want to do what I like, then quickly bring Śachī here before me for my gratification. I am now Indra and therefore the god of the Devas and all the worlds; therefore bring today quickly Indranī to my house.'

Hearing thus the words of the king Nahusa, the Devas and Devarsīs became anxious, went to Śachī and with their heads bowed down, spoke thus: 'O wife of Indra! The wicked Nahusa is now desiring you; he became angry and told as to send you to him quickly; O Devī! We have made him Indra and are therefore under him; what shall we do now under these circumstances?' Śachī, the wife of Indra, hearing their words, became absentminded and spoke to Bṛhaspati, thus: 'O Brāhmaṇa! I now take refuge unto you.'

61-62. Bṛhaspati said: 'O Devī! Do not be afraid of Nahusa; he has been deluded by *moha*. O child! I won't forsake the eternal religion and thus I won't give you over to the hands of Nahusa. No doubt that wretch suffers the severest torments in Hell to the end of *pralaya* (the Great Dissolution) who quits and hands over the distressed person under one's refuge to another. O good one! Be comfortable; I will never forsake you.'

Here ends the Seventh Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on Indra's living under disguise in the Mānas Lake in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VIII—Śachī Praises the Devī

1-11. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing that the wife of Indra had taken refuge under Bṛhaspati, the King Nahusa became very angry towards Bṛhaspati and spoke to the Devas: 'O Devas! I hear that the stupid son of Angirasa has given protection to Indra and has kept her in his house; I will therefore kill him quickly.'

Seeing the terrible Nahusa thus angry, the Devas and Ṛṣis consoled him and said: 'O King of kings! Do not be angry; quit this vicious motive yours.

See, the Ṛṣis in all the *dharma-śāstras*, have declared the holding of illicit connection with other's wives as a very heinous crime and have blamed it very much. You can consider that the daughter of Pulomā is always chaste, devoted to her husband very good-natured. How can she, when her husband is alive, take another husband? O Lord! You are now the Lord of the three worlds and hence the defender of faith and religion; and if a person like you act irreligiously, all the subjects will then go to annihilation. One who is a Lord should always observe the rules of good conduct. Besides there are many other celestial women in this Heaven as beautiful as Śachī; you can satisfy your thirst with them. Mutual love is recognized by the wise as the true originator of amorous dealings; ravishing a woman by force destroys all amorous sentiments. O King! And if the mutual love be similar and equal in all respects, then comes the true happiness; you have now got the post of Indra; therefore quit this idea of holding illicit connection with other's wives and indulge in other good thoughts. Demerits destroy prosperity and merits increase it. Therefore, O King! Leave all these bad thoughts and make your heart take a good turn and be happy.'

12-15. Nahusa said: 'O Devas! Where were you all when Indra stole away the wife of Gautama and when the Moon stole away the wife of Bṛhaspati? It is easy to give advice to others but to act according to that is very rare in this world. O Devas! Let the qualified Devī come to me; you will derive much benefit from it and the Devī, too, will get her highest happiness; there is no doubt about this. I tell you truly that in no other way I will be satisfied; bring Indrānī here quickly, whether by good words or by force.'

16-17. The Devas and Munis heard the words of the king Nahusa, smitten by the Cupid's arrows, got terrified and said: 'We will bring Indrānī to you by gentle words.' Saying thus, they went to the house of Bṛhaspati.

18-21. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Devas, going to the house of Bṛhaspati, spoke thus with folded hands: 'O *guru!* We know that Indrānī has taken shelter in your house; we will have to hand her over today to the king

Nahusa, for we all united have made over the post of Indra to Nahusa. Let this beautiful lady now choose and worship him.'

Hearing these awful words of the Devas, Bṛhaspati said to them: 'O Devas! This chaste woman, devoted to her husband, has now taken my shelter; therefore I can never part with her.' The Devas said: 'O Guru! Kindly advise then, if you do not part with Śachī Devī, how the king Nahusa be pleased; if he becomes angry, it will then be very difficult to please him.'

22-31. Bṛhaspati said: 'O Devas! Let Śachī now go to Nahusa, and tempt him with enticing words and make this condition that when her husband's death will be known to her, she will then accept Nahusa as her husband. How could she accept another husband when her husband was alive? Therefore let her now go in quest of her high-souled husband. Let Śachī thus make condition with him and, thus deceiving him, let her try her best to bring back her husband.'

O King! Then, after coming to this conclusion, Bṛhaspati and other Devas went with Indrānī to the king Nahusa. Seeing them come, especially looking at Indrānī the artificial king Nahusa became very glad and said to Indrānī: 'O Beloved! Today I am become the real Indra. O beautiful-eyed one! Worship me as your husband; see the Devas now have made me to be worshipped by all the gods.'

When Nahusa spoke thus, the Devī Śachī became filled with great shame; she began to tremble and said to the king: 'O Lord of the Devas! I desire to ask a boon from you. Better wait until I ascertain whether Indra is dead or alive, there is this doubt in my heart whether he lives or whether he is dead. O King of kings! Let me, first of all, clear my doubts. Kindly excuse me and wait until then. I tell this truly that after I ascertain the fact, I will worship you. I do not know anything whether Indra is dead or whether he has gone any where else.' When Śachī Devī spoke thus, Nahusa became very glad and saying 'Let it be so,' dismissed her.

32-47. Thus having received permission from the King to depart, Śachī hurriedly went to the Devas and spoke to them to try their best to bring Indra back as soon as possible. O King! Hearing these sweet and holy words of Indrāṇī, the Devas intently consulted with each other how they could get back Indra. They then went to Vaikuṇṭha and began to praise with hymns the original Deva, the God Viṣṇu, the Lord of the Universe, kind to those that seek His refuge.

The Devas, skilled in speaking, spoke to Viṣṇu with a very troubled heart: 'O Lord! Indra, the Lord of the Devas, is very much troubled with his sin *brahmahatyā*. Where is he staying now, invisible to all the beings? O Lord! He is now overcome with the sin *brahmahatyā* by killing Vṛtra, the best of the Brāhmaṇas. We ask your skilful and intelligent advice. O Lord! You are the sole refuge of him as well as of us. We are now involved in a great difficulty. Kindly show us the way how we, as well as Indra, can get out of this difficult crisis.'

Hearing the pitiful words of the Devas, Viṣṇu said: 'Let Indra perform the Aśvamedha sacrifice (Horse sacrifice) for the purification of his sins. By this *yajña*, that can destroy all sins, Indra will be purified and he will regain his Indraship; there is no doubt about this. The more so because the Devī, the Universal Mother, will be pleased with his Horse sacrifice and will destroy all his sins, *brahmahatyā* and others. Lo! Merely remembering Her destroys heaps of sins; and, if She be pleased by this Horse sacrifice, what wonder is there that sins of a more grave nature would be destroyed! And let Indrāṇī worship Bhagavatī daily; happiness will undoubtedly be gained by worshipping that most Auspicious One! By this the King Nahusa will be particularly deluded by the World Mother and will then be quickly destroyed by sins committed by himself. And Indra, purified by Aśvamedha, will soon regain his position and all his wealth.'

O king! Thus hearing the sweet beneficial words of Viṣṇu of indomitable prowess, the Devas went to the spot where resided Indra. Bṛhaspati and the other Devas consoled the distressed Indra and made him celebrate duly and in correct order, the Horse sacrifice, the greatest of all sacrifices. Indra

then distributed his sin *brahmahatyā* amongst the trees, rivers, mountains, women and the earth.

48-51. Thus casting aside his sin on all the above things, Indra became again free from his sin, and getting rid of his fever and uneasiness, abided by the time and remained there invisible in the tubular stem of the lotus. After doing that wonderful act, the Devas started from there and reached their own abodes. The daughter of Pulomā, suffering from her bereavement from Indra, spoke then to Bṛhaspati with great sorrow: 'O Lord! Why is my husband still invisible to me, when he has performed the Aśvamedha sacrifice? Kindly show me the way how I can get a sight of him.'

52-62. Bṛhaspati said: 'O Devī! Worship the most auspicious Bhagavatī; surely She will make your husband sinless and you will see him. The Devī Ambikā, the Upholdress of the Universe, will desist the King Nahusa from doing the wrongful act, and it is She that will delude him by Her Māyā and get his downfall from the Heavens.'

O King! When Bṛhaspati spoke thus, Śachī Devī got initiated by him in the Devī *mantram*, capable to secure success in any undertaking. Thus getting the *mantram* from her *guru*, She began to worship the Devī Bhuvaneśvarī duly with flowers, sacrificial victims and other necessary articles for worship. Thus Indrāṇī, with a view to see her husband, performed the worship of the Devī; she quit all the articles of enjoyment and luxury and assumed the garb of an ascetic; thus some time passed away. Then the Devī was pleased and appeared before Indrāṇī on the back of a Swan, in Her peaceful form, ready to grant boons to her. She looked, then, fiery like thousands of Moons; Her lovely beauty appeared in rays like thousands of fixed lightnings. The four *Vedas* personified began to praise Her in hymns from the four sides. Her two hands were adorned with a noose and a goad, and Her two other hands made signs to grant boons and to discard all fear. The Vaijayantī garland of clear crystal-like gems suspended from Her neck reached to Her feet. Her face was adorned with smiles and signs as if she would grant favors. She had three eyes and was the ocean of mercy, and

the Mother of all the *jīvas* from a worm up to Brahmā. Her two heavy breasts were filled with unbounded ocean of nectar-like juice of Peace and *mukti*. She was the Goddess of innumerable worlds, the Goddess of all and the Highest, endowed with all knowledge and the Incarnation of the Undecaying and Immoveable Brahmam. The Devī, then, began to address Śachī, the wife of Indra, in pleasant words and in voice deep like a rolling thunder.

63-69. The Devī said: 'O darling of Indra! I am much pleased with your worship. Better now ask your desired boon. O beautiful one! I have come here to grant you boon. To see Me is not an easy task; by the collected merits, acquired in thousands and thousands of births one is able to See Me.'

Hearing the words of the Devī, Śachī Devī, the wife of Indra, fell prostrate before Her feet and began to speak to the Highest Goddess, the Bhagavatī, Who seemed graciously pleased: 'O Mother! I now desire from Thee, that I may see my husband whom I attained after great difficulty, that I be freed from the fear arising out of King Nahusa, and I want that Indra be reinstated as Indra as he was before.'

The Devī said: 'O Lady of the Devas! Better go with this My messenger (*dūtī*) to Mānasarovara; there is installed My fixed form, named Viśvakāmā. You will see your Indra staying there very sorrowful and overwhelmed with terror. I will delude the King Nahusa within a very short period. O large-eyed one! Be calm and quiet; I will fulfil your desires; soon I will delude that king and deprive him of the seat of Indra.'

70-71. Vyāsa said: "The wife of Indra accompanied the messenger of the Devī and quickly reached the presence of her husband Indra. She was very pleased to see her long-wished for husband, in the state of disguise.

Here ends the Eighth Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the praising of the Bhagavatī by the wife of Indra and on getting the sight of Indra in the MahāPurāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IX—Downfall of Nahusa

1-2. Vyāsa said: "Indra was quite surprised to see in this state of solitude his dear wife Śachī, large-eyed and overwhelmed with much sorrow, and spoke thus: 'O Beloved! I am remaining here alone this desolate place unnoticed by all the *jīvas;* O auspicious-faced one! How have you come to know this? And how is it that you have come here?'

3-5. Śachī said: 'O Lord of the Devas! I have been able to know this place where you are staying by the grace of Bhagavatī's Feet, and I will get you back by Her grace. The Devas and Munis all united have installed the King Nahusa in your throne. That fellow says "O fair One! I am now made the King Indra; therefore you worship me as your husband." And thus oppresses me always. O Destroyer of other's strength! That vicious one speaks to me thus; I am weak; What can I do to him?'

6. Indra said: 'O beautiful one! I am now here waiting for the proper opportunity; O auspicious one! You should also make your mind calm and remain here, and wait for the proper time.'

7-12. Vyāsa said: "O King! After Indra had spoken thus, Śachī Devī became sorrowful, drew a deep sigh and, trembling, said: 'O Fortunate One! How can I stay there? That vicious man, puffed up with vanity and proud of his position will forcibly bring me under his control. The Devas and Munis say this to me out of his fear: "O beautiful one! The Lord of the Devas is now very much distressed with the arrows of Cupid; therefore go and worship him." O Tormentor of foes! How can the Brāhmaṇa Bṛhaspati protect me, being himself powerless and under the control of the Devas? O Lord! This is now my grave anxiety; I am a weak woman, having none to protect me and therefore always under the guidance of a man. Fate is now against me; how can I keep myself religious? I am a chaste woman, devoted to my husband; I have got no shelter there; who will protect me when I fall into misery!'

13-21. Indra said: ‘O beautiful one! I will now tell you one means which, if you adopt, will no doubt preserve your character in times of crisis. Women cannot preserve their chastity when they are protected by others by thousand one means; for lust penetrates into their restless minds and carries them to impure ways. It is the good and pure character that preserves a woman from a vicious course; therefore O smiling one! You adopt this good conduct and character and remain steady in your place. In case that deceitful wicked King Nahusa shows his violence upon you, then take time and secretly cheat him, O Madālase! Go to him when there will be nobody present and say: “O Lord of the world! Please come to me on a conveyance carried by the Ṛṣis (great ascetics), I will then be very delighted and gladly yield myself to you; this is certainly my vow.” O beautiful one! When you will say thus, that King, blinded by passion, will engage the Munis for the carriers of his conveyance. The ascetics, then, will be angry and curse him; the Munis will certainly burn him by the fire of their wrath; and the Divine Mother will no doubt help you. He who remembers the lotus feet of the Ambikā Devī never meets with any difficulties; and if there arises any difficulty, know certainly that it is for his immeasurable benefit. Therefore worship the Mother of the Universe, Who resides in the jewelled island (Maṇidvīpa) with your whole heart, according to the words of the *guru* Bṛhaspati.’

22-25. Vyāsa said: “O King! Hearing thus the Indra’s words, Śachī Devī said ‘Let it be so,’ and went to Nahusa, filled with confidence and inspiration to carry on the future work. Nahusa was very glad to see Śachī Devī and spoke thus: ‘O sweet-speaking one! Are you all right? I am now completely yours; you have fulfilled my word; therefore I say truly that I am your servant. O gentle-speaking one! When you have come to me, know that I am very glad. O smiling one! Do not feel any shame before me. I am now your devotee; worship me. O large-eyed one! Speak out what is that dear thing that I can do for you? I will carry that out at once.’

26-27. Śachī said: 'O Lord Vāsava! You have done all the works; now I have got one desire to ask from you, kindly fulfil this and then I will be yours. O one full of auspiciousness! Now fulfil my desire; I am speaking this to you.'

28. Nahusa said: 'O Thou, having a face sweet like the Moon! Speak out your desire; I will carry it out. O beautiful one with nice eyebrows! Even if that be unattainable, I will give that to you.'

29-31. Śachī said: 'O King of Kings! I cannot trust you; swear on oath that you will fulfill my desire. O King! A truthful King very rare on this earth; I will speak out my desire when I will be convinced that you are bound by truth. O King! When you will fulfil my desire, I will always remain under your control; this I speak truly to you.'

32. Nahusa said: 'O beautiful one! On all the sacrifices and gifts that I have ever made, I swear, on all my merits, that I will certainly carry out your word.'

33-37. Śachī said: 'Indra has got for his vehicles the horse Uccaiḥśravā, the Airāvata elephant and the chariot; Vāsudeva has got the bird vehicle Garuḍa; Yama has got his buffalo; Śaṅkara his Bull; Brahmā his Swan; Kartika has got his peacock and Gaṇeśa has got his mouse. But now, O Lord of the Devas! I want to see your vehicle, never witnessed before: I want to see the Munis and the great ascetics observing vows, to be your vehicle; this is not Viṣṇu's, Rudra's nor of the Devas and Rākśasas. O King! Let the Munis carry your conveyance, this is my ever-burning desire. O King of this earth! I know you the highest of all Devas; let your glory and splendor increase ever and ever; this is the intense desire reigning in my heart.'

38-56. Vyasa said: O King! Hearing Śachī's words, Nahusa, weak in intellect, laughed and beguiled by the Māyā of Bhagavatī, began to praise her and said at once: 'O beautiful one! Truly you have made a nice suggestion of my vehicle. O one having luxuriant hairs! I will soon carry out your words. O sweet-smiling one! Whoever is effeminate and of weak

virility, he is never able to engage the Munis as his carriers; no doubt, my unbounded strength will be rendered maṇifest when I come to you on a vehicle carried by the Munis. What wonder is there that the seven Ṛṣis (the seven stars of the constellation Great Bear) and all the Devaṛṣis would carry me, knowing me as the most capable and superior in all the three worlds by virtue of my sheer asceticism?'

Vyāsa said: "O King! The King Nahusa became very pleased and dismissed Śachī Devī. He, then, with a heart flamed with passion, called the Munis and said: 'O Munis! I am now become Indra and endowed with all powers thereof; therefore you all do my work without being at all surprised. I have got the seat of Indra but Indrāṇī is not coming to me. I called her to my presence and when I informed her of my desire, She had spoken to me with affection the following words: "O Indra of the Devas! O giver of one's honor! Better come to me on a vehicle carried by the Munis and do thus the one thing for me that I like." O Mahārṣis! To carry out this task is, indeed, difficult for me; therefore do you all unite and, out of mercy, do this for me in all its completeness. My heart is being always burnt, as I am very much attached to the wife of Indra; so I take refuge unto you to do this wonderful work for me.'

Though this request was very indecent and greatly humiliating, yet the Munis agreed to it out of pity, and also impelled, as it were, by the great Fate. When the Great Seers, the Munis consented to this proposal, the King, whose heart was very much attached to the daughter of Pulomā, became very glad and getting on the beautiful vehicle carried by the Munis, told them, 'Sarpa, Sarpa' (move on quickly). Then the King Nahusa, getting very much impassioned, touched with his feet the heads of the Munis, and being as it were smitten by the arrows of cupid, began to whip frequently the Ṛṣi Agastya, the best of the ascetics, who devoured the Rākṣasa Vātāpi, the husband of Lopāmudrā and who drank out the ocean, saying 'Sarpa, Sarpa' ('move on, move on,' another meaning of which is snake).

The Muni then became very angry on being thus whipped, and cursed him saying: 'O wicked one! As you are whipping me, saying "Sarpa, Sarpa," so

go and remain in the dense forest as a huge snake. When many years will elapse and when you will crawl on your own limb and suffer intense troubles, after that you will again come to heaven. You will be free from the curse when you will see the King Yudhiṣṭhira and hear from him the answers to several questions.’

57-67. Vyāsa said: “O King! Thus cursed, the King Nahusa began to chant hymns to that best of the Munis, and while praising, fell from the Heavens and instantly turned into a snake. Bṛhaspati, then, quickly went to the Mānasarovara Lake and informed Indra everything in detail. Indra became very glad on hearing in detail of the downfall of the King Nahusa from Heaven and remained there gladly. When the Devas and Munis saw this downfall into the earth of Nahusa, they all went to the Lake Mānasarovara where Indra was staying. They then all encouraged Indra and honored him by bringing him back to the Heavens. All the Devas and Ṛṣis installed Indra on the throne and then performed the inauguration ceremony of the all-auspicious Devī. On getting back his own throne, Indra began to sport in the beautiful Nandana Garden with his dear consort Śachī, in the home of the Devas.

Vyāsa said: “O King! Indra had to suffer such severe hardships on account of his slaying the Mahārṣi Viśvarūpa, the Lord of the Asuras. Subsequently through the grace of the Devī, he got back his own seat. O King! Thus I have narrated before you to my best, this excellent story of the killing of Vṛtrāsura and thus have answered your question. O ornament of the Kuru family! The fruits will be exactly according to the *karma* done. The effects of the *karma* done must be borne whether they be auspicious or inauspicious. So Indra had to suffer his *karma* for the killing of a Brāhmaṇa.

Here ends the Ninth Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on Indra’s getting the fruits of his killing a Brāhmaṇa and on the downfall of the King Nahusa from the Heavens in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter X—the Phase of Karma

1-5. Janamejaya said: "O Brāhmaṇa! You have described in detail the wonderful character of Indra, his displacement from his Heavens, and his suffering many hardships and at the same time, you have described very widely the greatness of the Highest Goddess of the world. But one doubt has arisen in my mind: Indra was very powerful and when he got the lordship over the Devas, which means in other words that no trouble would pain him, how was it that he had to feel pain and agony? He got the Lordship of the Devas and his highest position by performing one hundred Horse Sacrifices; how was it then that he was again displaced from that position? O ocean of mercy! Kindly explain to me the causes of all these. You know everything; you are the best of the Munis and the maker of the *Purāṇas;* I am your devoted disciple; therefore nothing there can be that cannot be mentioned to me. So, O highly fortunate One! Kindly remove my doubts."

Sūta said: "Thus asked by Janamejaya, Vyāsa the son of Satyavatī gladly spoke, in due order, the following words:

6-29. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hear, then the causes that are certainly very wonderful. The seers say that *karma* is of three kinds: *sañcita* (accumulated), *vartamāna* (present) and *prārabdha* (commenced). Each of these is again subdivided into three: *sāttvik, rājasik* and *tāmasik*. The accumulated effects of *karmas* done in many past lives is called *sañcita*, O King! The effects of this *sañcita-karma*, be it auspicious or inauspicious, be it for a long or for a short time, must have to be enjoyed by the beings whether they be good or bad. This *sañcita-karma* done by the embodied beings in several previous births can never be totally exhausted, even in hundred *koti kalpas,* without their being enjoyed. The *karma* that is being done by a *jīva* and that has not as yet been completed is called *vartamāna-karma*. The *jīvas* do this *vartamāna-karma*, auspicious or inauspicious, in their present embodiments.

At the time of birth, the soul takes up a part of the *sañcita-karma* for fructification. This part of the *sañcita-karma* is called *prārabdha-karma*. This

exhausts only when its effects have been fully borne out by the embodied soul. The beings cannot but bear the effects of this *prārabdha-karma*. O King! Know this for certain, that the effects of merits or demerits done previously must be borne by anybody, be he a Deva, a man, or an Asura, a Yakṣa or a Gandharva. The acts done previously go to form the new births of all beings. When the *karma* gets exhausted, then no more birth takes place. There is no doubt about this.

Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Indra and the other Devas, the Dānavas, Yakṣas, Gandharvas—all are under the control of this *karma*. O King! Were it not so, how could they get bodies that are the causes of the enjoyments of pains and pleasures of all the beings? Therefore, O King! Out of the *sañcita-karmas* done in many previous births, some *karmas* get ripe in due time and they maṇifest themselves; those maṇifested *sañcita-karmas* that are being enjoyed by an individual in the present birth are called *prārabdha-karmas*. Impelled by this *prārabdha-karma*, the Devas and the human beings all do meritorious as well as sinful acts. Thus Indra out of his past meritorious acts attained his Indraship, and out of his past sinful acts, committed the sin *brahmahatyā* and so he was dislodged from his Indraship. What doubt can exist here?

O King! So Nara and Nārāyaṇa, the sons of Dharma, had to take births out of their previous *karmas;* again Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa were born out of their *karmik* effects as part incarnations of this Nara and Nārāyaṇa. The Munis describe this *karma* as the basis of the *Purāṇas*. Know that he is born of a Deva who is very wealthy and prosperous; he who is not born of the part of a Muni, never writes any spiritual treatise on *jñāṇa* or spiritual knowledge; he who is not born of Rudra, never worships Rudra; who is not born of a Deva never distributes rice in charity; he who is not born of Śrī Viṣṇu never becomes the king and lord of the earth. O King! The embodied souls derive their bodies certainly from Indra, Agṇi, Yama, Viṣṇu and Kuvera. Indra presides over lordship, Agṇi presides over energy, Yama presides over anger, and Viṣṇu presides over strength. He who is powerful, fortunate, enjoying many enjoyments, learned and charitable, is said to be born of a Devāṁśa. O Lord of the earth! Similarly the Pāṇḍavas and

Vāsudeva, who was as glorious as Nārāyaṇa, were born of Devāṁśas. O King! Know this as quite certain that the bodies of the *jīvas* are the receptacles of pains and pleasures; and the embodied *jīvas* experience alternately pleasure and pain. No *jīva* is independent; he is always under the Great Fate. He experiences birth, death, pleasure and pain, not out of his self-will, but compelled and guided, as it were, by the unseen Fate.

30-41. O King! How very strong is that Fate can easily be judged by the following. The Pāṇḍavas were born in forest; then they went their own homes. They performed the great Rājasūya Sacrifice by virtue of their own strength. After this they had to suffer their exiles in forest a much greater and more terrible hardship indeed! Next Arjuna performed a very hard asceticism when the Devas, not self-controlled, became pleased and granted him an auspicious boon. Still he could not extricate himself from the hands of the terrible hardship; nowhere could be found the fruits of the merits acquired in the past when he was afterwards remaining in exile in his human body in the forest! The severe *tapasyā* that he did in Badarīkāśrama in his past incarnation as Nara, the son of Dharma, did not bear any fruit in his Arjuna birth.

Mysterious and inexplicable are the ways and means of *karma* with which the bodies of the several beings are concerned. How could men get an idea of it when the Devas themselves are at a loss to solve it? Bhagavān Vāsudeva had to take birth in the prison, a very critical and dangerous place; he was then carried by Vasudeva to the milkman Nanda's abode at Gokula; he remained there eleven years and thence came back to Mathurā where he killed by force Kaṁsa, the son of Ugrasena. Then he released his sorrowful father and mother from the bonds of prison and made Ugrasena the King of Mathurā. Afterwards he went to Dvārkā city, out of the fear of Kāla Yavana, the King of the Mlecchas; thus Janārdana Kṛṣṇa performed many great and heroic deeds, being impelled by Fate. Then he left his mortal coil at Prabhāsa, a place of pilgrimage, along with his relatives and acquaintances and then ascended to his Vaikuṇṭha abode. All the Yādavas, sons, grandsons, friends, brothers, sisters and ladies of the houses all died

under the curse of a Brāhmaṇa. O King! I have thus described to you the inexplicable ways of *karma*.

What more shall I say than the fact that Vāsudeva was killed by the arrows of a hunter!

Here ends the Tenth Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the phase of Karma in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XI—the Ascertainment of Dharma

1-10. Janamejaya said: "O King of the Brāhmaṇas! You said that Rāma and Kṛṣṇa took their incarnations to relieve the burden of earth. One great doubt arises in my mind on this point. At the end of the Dvāpara-yuga, the Earth, very much burdened and oppressed, assumed in anguish the form of a cow and took refuge under Brahmā. Brahmā then went with the Earth to Viṣṇu, the Lord of Lakṣmī, and thus prayed, 'O Vibhu! Let You, with all the other gods, incarnate soon on earth at the house of Vāsudeva to relieve the Earth of Her load, as well as to protect the righteous.'

When Brahmā thus prayed, Bhagavān Viṣṇu incarnated as the son of Devakī, along with Balarāma to lessen the burden of the Earth. And in fact, he relieved the Earth to a certain extent by killing many vicious persons, many wicked and irreligious Kings. But along with that, Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Virāta, Drupada, Somādatta, and Karṇa the son of the Sun were killed. But, see! that those who plundered afterwards His riches, and stole away the wives of Hari, those crores of Ābhīras, Śakas, Mlecchas, Nisādas and other vicious people remained alive; how could it then be said that the Earth was relieved when Kṛṣṇa did not kill those people! O fortunate one! When I see all the people in this Kali-yuga addicted to sinful acts, this great doubt is not going out of my mind: how the Earth had been relieved of Her load?"

11-14. Vyāsa said: "O King! As the *yuga* changes, so the people change in course of time. Nothing can alter its course, for this is caused by the *yuga-dharma,* the *dharma* peculiar to each *yuga*. Therefore if all the subjects are

considered wicked and vicious according to the law of the *yuga-dharma*, then this creation would be destroyed; hence Kṛṣṇa killed only those Dānavas and vicious Kṣatriyas that were really the burden of Earth.

O King! The persons that are devoted to religion take their births in the Satya-yuga; those that are fond of religion and wealth become maṇifest in the Tretā-yuga; those that like *dharma* (religion), *artha* (wealth) and *kāma* (desires) are born in the Dvāpara-yuga, and those that dote on wealth and lust, they are seen in the Kali-yuga. O King! Know this as certain that these characteristics, peculiar to each *yuga*, never vary; and know this too, that Time, the Lord of *dharma* and *adharma*, is always present."

15-18. The King said: "O intelligent one! Where are those pious persons now that were born as high-souled religious persons in the Satya-yuga; where are those Munis now who were devoted to charity in the Tretā or Dvāpara-yuga? Again where will go these shameless and merciless persons that are being seen now in this Kali-yuga, these vicious creatures that revile their own *gurus?* O highly intelligent one! I am very eager to know how these religious matters are brought to a decision and settlement; kindly describe to me in detail all these secret truths."

19-30. Vyāsa said: "O King! Persons born in the Satya-yuga who perform acts of merit, go to the Deva-loka. O King! The Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras, if they remain in their own spheres and if they be devoted to religious acts, go to their respective spheres earned by their meritorious deeds. By virtue of truth, mercy, charity, going to one's own wives, not injuring animals, having no jealousy and showing mercy equally towards all, by practicing these universal forms of religion, even the lowest castes—washermen and others—all go to Paradise. So in the Tretā and Dvāpara-yugas men go to Heaven by virtue of merits earned in practicing their own *dharma;* but in this Kali-yuga persons addicted to vicious acts go to terrible hells, and remain there until the end of the Kali-yuga when they will be again born in this earth. O King! When the Satya-yuga begins and the Kali-yuga ends, at this junction in time, the virtuous high-souled persons descend from Heaven and are born on this earth; and when the

Dvāpara ends and the Kālī begins, the vicious souls come to the earth again from their hells. O King! Know this as the course of Time; it never becomes otherwise. See, then, that the Kali-yuga tends to do vicious things and the people, therefore, become vicious.

At times, the birth of beings takes place otherwise than the laws of the *yugas*, out of the strange combinations of Fate—sometimes good persons are seen in the Kali and vicious persons are seen in the Satya. For this reason those that do meritorious acts in the Kali-yuga are born as men in the Dvāpara; so the Dvāpara good persons take their births as men in the Tretā; and the Tretā good persons are born as men in the Satya-yuga. Again those who are vicious in the Satya-yuga become persons of the Kali-yuga. The *jīvas* suffer miseries on account of their own bad *karma;* they again suffer more miseries by doing over and over again those bad *karmas* by virtue of the *yuga-dharma*."

31. Janamejaya said: "O Bhagavān! Describe particularly the details of the *yuga-dharma*. I am now very desirous to hear which *dharma* is for which *yuga."*

32-54. Vyāsa said: "O King! I will now show to you by example the influence of the religion peculiar to each *yuga;* hear it attentively. O King! The hearts even of saints are quite disturbed by the *yuga-dharma*. See! Your father was a religious and high-souled monarch; still the wicked Kali defiled his mind and prompted him to do an act very insulting to a Brāhmaṇa. Otherwise why would he, being a renowned prince amongst the Kṣatriyas and a descendant of Yayāti, thus go and encircle a snake round the throat of an ascetic Brāhmaṇa? Therefore, O King! all actions are being influenced by the *yuga-dharma*. The Paṇḍitas also recognize this. If you try your best to perform any religious act, even then the *yuga-dharma* would prevail; yet you would be able to perform to a certain extent a part of your intention.

O King! In the Satya-yuga, the Brāhmaṇas were versed in the *Vedas*, always devoted to worship the Highest Force, with an ardent desire to see the

Devī; they were devoted to Gāyatrī with *praṇava*, devoted to the meditation of Gāyatrī, always reciting silently Gāyatrī, and the Māyā-bīja *mantram* (*hrīṁ*) was the chief *mantram*. In every village, the Brāhmaṇas were very eager to erect temples of the Devī Mahā-Māyā Ambikā and were truthful, merciful and pure, devoted to their own respective works. The Kṣatriyas, skilled in the science of the highest knowledge, were ever engaged in doing things ordained by the *Vedas* and were always intent in protecting well their subjects. The Vaiśyas did their cultivation and trade and the Śūdras always served the other three castes.

Thus in the Satya-yuga, all the *varṇas* (castes) were devoted to the worship of the Devī Ambikā, the Highest Śakti; but in the Tretā-yuga, the observance of the religion declined a little and in the Dvāpara, it declined very much. O ornament of Indra! Those who were Rākṣasas before, become the Brāhmaṇas of the Kali-yuga; they are the flowers of atheists, deceptors of men, untruthful, without any *Vedas*, devoid of the Vedic practices, arrogant, cunning, egoistic, and capable only to serve the Śūdras. Some of them try to find fault with the *sanātana-dharma* and are the promulgators of various other creeds, wicked, fallen from their religion and given to much talking. O King! As Kali gets stronger, so the true religion declines and ultimately dies; and, in that proportion, the Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras are also devoid of their religion. When Kali will be in full swing, the Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras will all be untruthful, vicious; the Brāhmaṇas will act like Śūdras and will accept other's gifts. O King! The women in the Kali-yuga would be very passionate, avaricious and ignorant. They would be very powerful and insolent, wilful, vicious and untruthful and so would be a source of pain to the society. They would think themselves vainly religious and learned and would be always ready to impart religious instructions and deceive their own husbands and be exceedingly vicious.

O King! Our minds are purified by the food that we take; when our minds are pure, the Light of *dharma* shines clearly. The customs and practices of *varṇāśrama-dharma* get intermixed with each other and so arises the fault of

dharma-śaṅkara, mixture of the several parts of religion with each other. When the *dharma-śaṅkara* creeps in, the *varṇa-śaṅkara* is seen: purity in blood and other matters of birth are lost. Thus, in the Kali-yuga, all the *dharmas* will gradually die out and ultimately nothing will be heard about one's own religion. O King! In this *yuga* even the religious high-souled persons will be found to do irreligious acts! The nature of Kali is so pervasive that nobody will be able to quit it. O King! Thus in this age, men naturally commit vicious things; with ordinary means, therefore, no one becomes able to extricate themselves from the worst vicious habits."

55-56. Janamejaya said: "O Bhagavān! You know all and you are versed in all the *śāstras;* what will be the fate of so many persons in this Kali-yuga? If there be any path, kindly describe it to me."

57-65. Vyāsa said: "O King! There is only one path and none other which can save a man from the sin of this Kali; and that is this: The *jīvas* must meditate on the lotus feet of the Highest Devī for the purification of all their faults and sins. O King! There is so much strength in Her sin-destroying Name, that the amount of sin in this world falls much less in proportion to that. Where, then is the cause of fear? Her Name, uttered at random, even in an unconscious state, bestows so much unspeakable results that even Hari, Hara and others have not the capacity to know it.

O King! The mere remembrance of the name of Śrī Devī is an atonement for a multitude of sins; then it behoves that every man, afraid of the Kali-yuga, residing in a place of pilgrimage, ought to remember incessantly the Name of the Highest Deity. Even if anybody cuts, pierces, and kills all the beings in this whole world, he won't be touched with the sins if he bows down with devotion before the Devī. O King! I have narrated to you all the secret truths of all the *śāstras*. Consider all these fully and always worship the lotus feet of the Devī. All men are reciting silently the *japam* called the Ajapā Gāyatrī; still they do not know the glory of it; such is the powerful influence of Māyā. All the Brāhmaṇas are reciting in the depth of their hearts the Gāyatrī *mantram*, yet they do not know the glory of it, otherwise they would have been liberated; such is the great influence of Māyā. O

King! I have described to you all that you asked me about the *yuga-dharmas;* what more do you want to hear?"

Here ends the Eleventh Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the ascertainment of Dharma in the Mahā Purāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XII—the War between Ādi and Baka

1-2. The King said: "O Best of Munis! Tell me the names of the holy places of pilgrimage on the surface of this earth, the holy *kṣetras* and the holy rivers; what are the fruits acquired in bathing there and in making charitable gifts as well; also what are the rules of the journeys and acts there are to be conducted?"

3-34. Vyāsa said: "Hear; I am describing to you various *tīrthas* or places of pilgrimage as well as those that are highly extolled as the best places favorite to the Devī. Amongst the rivers the following are reckoned as chief and holy: The Ganges, Yumunā, Sarasvatī, Narmadā, Gandakī, Sindhu, Gomatī, Tamasā, Kāverī, Chandrahāgā, Vetravatī, Charmanvatī, Saraju, Tāpī and Sāvramatī. Besides these, there are hundreds of rivers on the surface of this earth; of them, those that fall into the ocean are holier, and those that have not reached the ocean are less holy. Of those rivers that fall into the ocean, those that always flow with great current are comparatively holier; but in the two months Śrāvana and Bhādra (15th July - 15th September) all the rivers are considered as if they are during their menstruation periods; at this time also some rivers carry water of the rains just sufficient to supply the villagers with water.

O King! The following are the famous places of pilgrimages calculated to bestow merits: Puṣkara, Kurukṣetra, the holy Dharmāranya, Pravāsa, Prayāga, Naimiśāraṇya and Arbudāraṇya. O King! Of the mountains, the following are considered as sacred: Śrī Śaila, Sumeru, Gandhamādana; of the lakes, the following are very holy and very famous: Mānasarovara, Bindusarovara and Aksoda; these are the chief lakes. To those Munis that

meditate on their *ātman*, all the hermitages are sacred; still the hermitage of Badri is always considered very sacred and the most celebrated; here Nara and Nārāyaṇa, the two famous Munis, practiced their asceticism. The Vāmanāśrama and Śatayūpāśrama are also well known; thus every hermitage is named after the Muni that practiced asceticism there. Thus innumerable holy places on the surface of the earth are mentioned by the Munis as tending to sanctify the hearts of the persons. At all these holy places, the Devī is worshipped in special sites consecrated to Her. All the sins are destroyed by their mere sight. The devotees of the Devī stay there, with rules obeyed. I will mention afterwards some of these places in the course of my narrations.

O Best of kings! Going to these holy places, charity, vows, sacrifices, asceticism and good acts all depend on one another. The holy places of pilgrimages, asceticism and observance of vows depend on the purity of the articles (*dravya-śuddhi*), on the purity and one-pointedness of actions (*kriyā-śuddhi*) and on the purity of the mind and heart (*citta-śuddhi*). Some may attain, at times, the *dravya-śuddhi* and *kriyā-śuddhi;* but everyone finds it very difficult and, indeed, rarely get the *citta-śuddhi*. O King! This mind always tries to seek shelter with various objects and is, therefore, always restless. How, then, can the purity of mind be effected, with ease, when it is occupied with all sorts of thoughts on various objects? Cupidity, anger, greed, pride and egotism—these bring about all sorts of obstacles in the holy places of pilgrimages, in practicing *tapasyā* and in observing vows.

O King! Non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, chastity and purity, controlling of senses and observing one's own religion, all these bring about the fruits of the labor in visiting all *tīrthas*. They bestow fruits that can be obtained by visiting all the *tīrthas*. During pilgrimage, one forsakes one's *nitya-karma* (daily duties) and one has to come in contact with various persons. Hence one's journey becomes fruitless; rather it becomes a source of sin. The waters of the sacred places can only wash the outside dirt and the impurities of the physical bodies; they can never wash the impurities of their inner minds. Were it the fact that the waters of the *tīrthas* could purify

their minds, why was it then that the Munis residing on the banks of the Ganges and devoted to God, ever indulged themselves with feelings of jealousy and enmity against each other? The humble Munis like Vasiṣṭha, and the Ṛṣis like Viśvāmitra were always entangled in love and hatred, and they were ever impatient with anger. Therefore it is evident that the internal purification, the purification of heart, the bathing in the *jñāṇa*-Gaṅgā flowing within, no doubt removes more the dirt than the Ganges and other places of pilgrimages.

O King! No doubt this fact must be admitted on all hands that one's impurity of mind is washed away if by the strange combination of Fate, one comes in intimate contact with a man possessed of the Divine Knowledge. O King! The *Vedas* or *śāstras*, vows or austerities, sacrifices or gifts—none can purify the heart. See! Vasiṣṭha the son of Brahmā, though versed in the *Vedas* and residing on the banks of the Ganges, was under the control of love, hatred and other infirmities. Out of the enmity of Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha, arose the great battle named *ādi-baka*, astonishing even to the Gods.

In this, the ascetic Viśvāmitra was cursed by Vasiṣṭha, on account of some curse in connection with the king Hariścandra and had to take his birth as a crane (*baka*). The Ṛṣi Vasiṣṭha was cursed also by Viśvāmitra and was born as a bird named *śarāri*. Thus the two powerful Ṛṣis were born as *ādi* and *baka* and lived on the banks of the Mānasarovara; they fought for full ten thousand years (*ajuta*) terribly, out of anger, with their nails and beaks like two maddened lions."

35-36. The King asked: "O Muni! Why were the two Mahārṣis, the two great ascetics and devoted to religion, involved in enmity with each other? Both of them were intelligent; how was it that they, knowing the act of cursing to be a source of pain to men, cursed each other so painfully?"

37-48. Vyāsa said: "O King! In former times, there was born in the solar dynasty a king Hariścandra, the son of Triśaṅku; he was the best of the kings and reigned before Rāmacandra. That King had no issue and

therefore promised to Varuṇa, "O Lord of water and ocean! If I get a son born to me, I will perform a sacrifice, called Naramedha, where I will sacrifice my son for your propitiation." Varuṇa was very pleased with the king when he made such a vow; and the exquisitely beautiful queen held the foetus in the womb. Seeing his wife in the family way, the king was very pleased and performed all the purificatory ceremonies pertaining to the foetus in the womb. O King! When the queen was delivered of a son endowed with all auspicious signs, the king Hariścandra was very glad, performed duly all the *jāta-karma* (natal) ceremonies and distributed as charity big sums of gold and many cows giving good quantities of milk. When the festivities on the birth of the child were celebrated in the palace on a grand scale, Varuṇa, the Lord of Waters, assuming the form of a Brāhmaṇa, came up there. The King, too, honored him duly with seat and worshipped him regularly and asked him about his purpose, when Varuṇa spoke to him: 'O King! I am Varuṇa, the Lord of Waters; you promised before that you would perform Naramedha sacrifice where you would sacrifice your son; now do those things and keep your words true.' The King became very much confused and was very much pained at heart. He then checked his mental feelings of pain and spoke to the Deva Varuṇa, with folded hands: 'O Lord! I will do the sacrifice duly and fulfil the promise that I made before you and keep my word. But, O best of the Devas! My legal wife will be pure from her *sūtikā-śauchak* after one month, when I will perform the Naramedha sacrifice.'

49-53. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the words of the king Hariścandra, Varuṇa returned to his own abode; the King also became glad, but he was somewhat anxious for fear of the destruction of the child. When one month was complete, the sweet-speaking Varuṇa, the holder of the noose, assuming the form of a very pure Brāhmaṇa, again came there to the palace of the king to examine him. The King worshipped him duly and gave him the seat to sit and spoke, with humility, the following reasonable words: 'O Lord! My son is not yet purified; how can he be tied to the sacrificial post for being immolated? Therefore I will perform that sacrifice when the boy becomes cleansed after a purificatory rite and becomes a

Kṣatriya. O Deva! If you know me as your humble servant, have mercy on me; I will then consider myself as blessed. See! The children, not passed through purificatory rites, are not entitled to any act; therefore wait for some time longer.'

54-56. Varuṇa said: 'O King! You are deceiving me and putting off the time longer and longer; I now see that you were issueless before and now that you have got a son, you are bound up in an indissoluble tie of affection for a son. Whatever it be, I now go back to my home at your pitiful request; I will wait for some time longer and I will come again. O child! Let you then be true to your words; if it be otherwise, I will surely curse you and thus give vent to my angry feelings.'

57. The King said: 'O Lord of the Waters! After the completion of the *samāvartan* ceremony (a pupil's return home after finishing his holy study), I will duly sacrifice my son at the great Naramedha sacrifice; there is no doubt.'

58-71. Vyāsa said: "Varuṇa was very pleased at the King's words and quickly went back saying 'Let it be so.' The king also became comforted. On the one hand, the king Hariścandra's son became widely known by the name of Rohita; and as he got older, he became gradually versed in all the sciences and became very clever and intelligent. That boy then came to know by degrees the cause of the sacrifice in full detail; and knowing that his death is quite certain, became very afraid, quickly fled away from the King and went and stayed in caves of mountains with a fearful heart. Then when the proper time came, Varuṇa came up there to the royal palace, desirous to have the sacrifice and spoke to the King thus: 'O King! Now the prescribed time has come; therefore perform the sacrifice that you have resolved to celebrate.' The King was very much pained to hear this and spoke with a very sad appearance:

'O Best of the Devas! What can I do now? My son has fled away out of the fear of his life; I do not know his whereabouts.' Varuṇa became very angry at these words and cursed him thus: 'O Liar! You are an hypocrite *paṇḍita;*

therefore you deceived me frequently. Let therefore the disease dropsy come and attack your body.' Varuṇa, the holder of the noose, cursing thus, went back to his own abode. The King was attacked with that disease, remained in his own residence, afflicted with cares and anxieties. Rohita, the son of the king Hariścandra, heard about the severe illness of his father when he was very much tormented with that disease as the curse of Varuṇa.

One day a traveller told him: "O son of the King! Your father is very ill with dropsy due to the curse, and is very sorry. Certainly your brain has turned wrong; vain is your coming in this world; you have passed your life to no purpose, for you are staying still in this mountain cave, abandoning your sorrowful father. Certainly you are a bad disobedient son; what use is there in your keeping up this body? What purpose will be served by your birth? When you have got this body, you have abandoned that father and are staying in this solitary cave. Know this as certain that to sacrifice one's life is the duty of a good and obedient son; therefore what more shall I say now than this that your father the king Hariścandra ailing from a severe illness, is very sorry for you and is always weeping?"

72-74. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing from the passerby these good words, the prince Rohita wanted to go to his sorrowful father attacked with disease, when Indra assuming a Brāhmaṇa form came up to him and began to speak to him when he was alone like one who was filled with mercy. 'O Son of a King! You are a fool; are you not positively acquainted with the fact that your father is in trouble; why then do you intend in vain to go there?'

Here ends the Twelfth Chapter on the cause of the war between ādi and Baka in the Sixth Skandha of the MahāPurāṇam of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIII—the Battle of Ādi and Baka

1-6. Indra said: "O Prince! The King Hariścandra promised before to Varuṇa that he would celebrate for his propitiation the great Naramedha sacrifice, when he would offer his own son as a victim to be immolated. O Prince! You are very intelligent; can't you grasp this idea that your father has become merciless due to his suffering in this illness, and no sooner you go there than he will make you the victim and tie you to the sacrificial post when you will be slaughtered.' The indomitable Indra thus prohibiting the son, he began to stay there deluded by the *māyā* of the great Mahā-Māyā. O King! Thus whenever the prince heard of his father's severe illness, he wanted to go to his father, Indra repeatedly used to go to him and prevent him from doing so. On the other hand, the King Hariścandra became very much afflicted, and seeing his family *guru* the all-knowing well-wisher Vasiṣṭha close by, asked him, 'O Bhagavān! what am I to do now? I am now very impatient with the agonies of this disease and am very weak; besides I am very much afraid of it. Kindly give me a good advice and save me.'

7-9. Vasiṣṭha said: 'O King! There is a good remedy for the cure of your disease. It is stated in the *śāstras* that the sons are of thirteen kinds; *aurasa, ksattraja, datrima, krītrima,* etc. Therefore pay a reasonable price, buy one good Brāhmaṇa boy and perform your sacrifice with that boy. O King! Thus Varuṇa will be pleased and you will be cured of your disease.'

10-24. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the words of Vasiṣṭha, the King Hariścandra addressed to his minister: 'O Minister-in-Chief! You are very sharp and intelligent, therefore you better try your best and seek in my kingdom a Brāhmaṇa boy. In case a poor Brāhmaṇa be willing, out of his love for money, to give over his son, then give him any amount he wants and bring his son. O Minister! By all means, bring a Brāhmaṇa boy for this sacrifice; in other words, do not be miserly or act lazily to perform my business. You should pray to any Brāhmaṇa thus: "Take this money and give your son, who will be sacrificed in a sacrificial ceremony as a victim".'

Thus ordered, the minister sought for a Brāhmaṇa boy in towns after towns, villages after villages, and houses after houses. Til at last, he came to know that in his kingdom there was a poor distressed Brāhmaṇa named Ajīgarta, who had three sons. Then the minister gave to the Brāhmaṇa what he wanted, purchased his second son named Śunaḥśepha and brought him before the King. And handed him over to the King, saying, 'This Brāhmaṇa boy is fit for the sacrificial victim.' The King then gladly brought the best Brāhmaṇas versed in the *Vedas* for the performance of the sacrifice, and collected all the articles requisite for the purpose. When the sacrifice was commenced, the great Muni Viśvāmitra, seeing Śunaḥśepha tied, prohibited the King and said: "O King! Do not be so bold as to sacrifice this boy; let this boy be free. O long-lived one! I am asking this from you today and if you obey it, certainly it will do good to you. O King! This boy Śunaḥśepha is crying; his cries are paining my heart, and I am feeling pity for him. Hear my word and free this boy out of mercy. See! The pure-hearted Kṣatriyas, in ancient days, used to sacrifice their own bodies and thus preserve others' bodies, so that they might attain the Heavens. And now you are killing this Brāhmaṇa boy forcibly so that you may preserve your own body; judge how vicious is this your act! Be merciful to this boy. O King! Everyone likes his own body to the same extent; you are feeling this yourself; therefore if you take my word, then quit this boy.'

25-36. Vyāsa said: "O King! The King Hariścandra was ailing very much; hence be did not pay any heed to the Muni's words and did not quit the boy. Thereupon the very fiery-spirited Viśvāmitra became very angry with the King. Then Viśvāmitra the son of Kuśika, the foremost of the knowers of the *Vedas*, showed mercy on Śunaḥśepha and gave him the Varuṇa *mantram*. Śunaḥśepha, very much afraid to lose his life, earnestly repeatedly remembered Varuṇa and uttered that *mantram* in *pluta* tone (lengthened or prolonged).

Varuṇa, too, the ocean of mercy, knowing that the Brāhmaṇa boy was praising him with hymns, came up to that spot and freed Śunaḥśepha from his bondage and also freed the King from his disease and went back to his

own abode. Thus the Mahārṣi Viśvāmitra became very glad to rescue the Muni's son from the jaws of death. The King Hariścandra did not observe the words of Viśvāmitra; hence the son of Gādhi harboured anger towards the King within his heart. One day while the King Hariścandra was riding in a forest at midday on the banks of the river Kauśika, when he desired to kill a boar. Viśvāmitra in the garb of an old Brāhmaṇa asked from him everything that he had, including his dominion and thus cunningly took away everything from the King.

The Mahārṣi Vasiṣṭha, seeing his Yajamāna Hariścandra suffering much, became wounded and felt pain in his mind. One day when he met casually with Viśvāmitra in a forest, he said: 'O wicked Kṣatriya! A disgrace to your family! You have in vain put on the garb of a Brāhmaṇa! Your religion is like a crane; you are full of vanity; you boast for nothing. The best of kings Hariścandra is my client; he is faultless. Still, O fool! Why are you giving him so much trouble? As you are religious as a crane is religious, so take your birth as a crane.' Viśvāmitra, thus cursed by Vasiṣṭha, cursed Vasiṣṭha in return, and said: 'O Vasiṣṭha! As long as I will remain a crane, so long you also remain as *śarāli* or *ādi* bird.'

37-42. Vyāsa said: "O King! The two angry Munis thus cursed each other and the two were born as a crane and a *śarāli* or *ādi* bird. The crane Viśvāmitra built its nest on the top of a tree on the Mānasarovara lake, and began to live there. Vasiṣṭha, too, assumed the form of an *ādi* bird, and built his nest on the top of another tree and lived there. Thus the two Ṛṣis spent their days in full enmity towards each other. These two birds used to shriek so terribly loud that they became a nuisance to all; they fought daily with each other. They used to strike each other with beaks, wings and nails; thus they were covered all over their bodies with cuts and wounds and smeared with blood. They began to look like Kimśuka trees. Thus the two Ṛṣis, in the shape of birds, in their states of bondage due to each other's curse, passed many years there."

43. Janamejaya said: "O Brāhmaṇa! Kindly tell me how Vasiṣṭha and Kauśika, the two Ṛṣis, became free from their curses; I am very curious to hear this."

44-54. Vyāsa said: "Brahmā, the Grandsire of his subjects, came there with all the Devas, filled with mercy on seeing those two Ṛṣis at war against each other. Brahmā, the lotus-seated, made them desist from such a fight, consoled them and freed both of them from each other's curses. Then the Devas went back to their own abodes and the illustrious lotus-seated Brahmā went to the Satyaloka, seated on his Swan. Mahārṣi Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra then became friends, and were tied with bonds of affection at the advice of Brahmā; they went back to their own *āśramas*.

O King! Now see, that the Mahārṣi Vasiṣṭha, the son of Mitrā-Varuṇa, fought for nothing with Viśvāmitra, so painful to both the parties. Who then, amongst the human beings, the Dānavas or the Devas can conquer his *ahaṅkāra* (egotism) and be always happy? Therefore the *citta-śuddhi*, the purity of the heart—that purity which imparts to man the blessedness of God-vision—is very difficult even for the high-souled persons; one has to practice for that with the greatest caution and utmost effort. To those persons, that are void of this *citta-śuddhi*, it is all vain to go to places of pilgrimage, to make charities, to practice *tapasyā*, to be truthful; in fact anything which is the means to attain *dharma* becomes useless.

O King! *śraddhā* (faith) is of three kinds: *sāttvikī, rājasikī* and *tāmasikī* to all persons in all their religious matters. The *sāttvik* faith is the only one of the three that yields entire results; and it is very rare in this world. The *rājasik* faith, done according to due rules, yields half the results thereof, and the *tāmasik* faith is fruitless and inglorious; the *tāmasik* faith arises in persons that are overwhelmed with lust, anger, greed, etc. Therefore, O King! Keep to the company of the good, hear the *śāstras, Vedānta* etc., free the heart of worldly desires and then concentrate it to the worship of the Devī and live in a sacred place of pilgrimage. Men afraid and troubled with the defects of the Kali-yuga, should always take the name of the Devī, sing praises and meditate on Her lotus feet. Thus the *jīvas* will not have any fear of Kali-

yuga, and even the fallen vicious persons will easily be able to cross this ocean of the world and be free. There is no doubt about this.

Here ends the Thirteenth Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the description of the battle between Ādi and Baka after the discourse on Śunaḥśepha in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIV—the Birth of Vasiṣṭha

1-2. Janamejaya said: "O Bhagavān! Mahārṣi Vasiṣṭha was the mind-born son of Brahmā; how is it then that you have named him as Maitrā-Vāruṇī. Is it that he got this name by some action or by some *guṇas?* Kindly tell me the origin of this name, O best of speakers!"

3-4. Vyāsa said: "O King! It is quite true that the illustrious Vasiṣṭha was the noble son of Brahmā, but he had to quit that body due to the curse of King Nimi and take a second body from Mitrā Varuṇa; hence he is named in this world as Maitrā-Vāruṇī."

5-6. The King said: "O Bhagavān! How was it that the religious Vasiṣṭha, the best of the Munis and the son of Brahmā, was cursed by the King? Oh! The Munis have to suffer the dreadful curse of Kṣatriya kings! This seems very wonderful to me. O knower of *dharma!* Why did that king curse the innocent Muni? I am very curious to hear the cause of this; kindly tell me the cause of the curse."

7-30. Vyāsa said: "O King! I told you already in particular all the causes of these. This *saṁsāra* is pervaded by the three *guṇas* of Māyā: *sāttva, rājas* and *tāmas*. Whether the kings practice their *dharma* or the ascetics practice their *tapas*, all their actions are interpenetrated with these *guṇas;* therefore they cannot shine so brightly. The Kings and Munis sometimes performed very severe penances and austerities under the influence of lust, anger, greed and *ahaṅkāra*. O King! All, whether they be the Kṣatriyas or the Brāhmaṇas, who perform their sacrifices overpowered with this *rājo-guṇa*, perform these actions guided by *sāttva-guṇa*.

King Nimi was cursed by the Ṛṣi, and the Ṛṣi was cursed again by the King; thus they met with greater calamities and painful sufferings, fruits from the hands of the powerful Fate. O King! In this world of the three *guṇas*, it is very difficult for the beings to get *dravya-śuddhi, kriyā-śuddhi* and the pure effulgent *citta-śuddhi*. O King! Know this as the influence wielded by the Highest Śakti, the Mother of this Universe. Nobody is able to overstep it; but he whom She favors can cross this world, bounded by the three *guṇas*, in a moment. What more can be said than the fact that Hari, Hara, Brahmā and the other Gods cannot free themselves without Her grace. Moreover, the sinners like Satyavrata and others become free when Her Grace comes upon them. Nobody in these three worlds can know what reigns in Her mind; again, this is also a certain fact that She gets Herself bound by Her own will to Her devotees. Therefore it is extremely desirable that one should have recourse to *sāttvikī-bhakti* for the complete removal of faults and sins. And as the devotion with attachment and vanity is always injurious to men, therefore it is highly beneficial to quit it; there is no doubt about this.

O King! There was a king named Nimi, born of the family of Ikṣvāku. He was beautiful, well-qualified, virtuous, truthful, charitable, endearing to his people, a sacrificer, of pure conduct and manners, ready to govern his subjects, intelligent and endowed with knowledge. For the benefit of the Brāhmaṇas, that high-souled king established a city named Jayantupur in close vicinity to the hermitage of Gautama. Thus some time passed when this *rājasik* idea arose in his mind that 'I will perform a sacrifice extending for a good many years, where I will give exhorbitant *dakśiṇās* (remunerations to the priests and Brāhmaṇas).' Getting permission from his own father Ikṣvāku, he began to collect all the ingredients necessary for the sacrifice, as advised by the high-souled persons. He invited the all-knowing Munis and ascetics, versed in the *Vedas* and in conducting sacrifices—Bhṛgu, Angirā, Vāmadeva, Gautama, Vasiṣṭha, Pulastya, Richika, Pulaha, Kratu and others well-versed in the *Vedas*. Then that religious King Nimi, collecting all the materials necessary for sacrifice,

worshipped his own *guru* Vasiṣṭha and then spoke to him with great humility:

'O Best of Munis! I will perform a sacrifice; kindly perform this my sacrificial act; you are my *guru* and therefore you know everything; so do this sacrifice for me. All the articles for this purpose are brought and cleansed. O *guru!* Know that I mean to be engaged in this sacrifice for five thousand years; this is my *saṅkalpa* (desire). I will worship the Goddess Ambikā in this sacrifice, and for Her satisfaction I am arranging for it according to the prescribed rules.'

Hearing King Nimi's words, Vasiṣṭha said: 'O best of Kings! Indra, the King of the Devas, has already selected me for his sacrificial ceremony. Now Indra is ready to do the sacrifice for the propitiation of the Highest Śakti and I have initiated him for five hundred years. Therefore, O King! you will have to wait until I complete the Indra's *yajñā*. After fully completing all his works, I will come here. Therefore, O King! wait until then.'

31-42. The King said: 'O Best of Munis! I have already invited other Munis for this sacrifice and have collected all the materials; how, then, can I wait for you? O Brāhmaṇa! You are the foremost of those versed in the *Vedas* and you are the family *guru* of the noble Ikṣvāku. How is it then, avoiding my work you are ready to go elsewhere? O Best of Brāhmaṇas! Under the uncontrollable greed of wealth you have lost all senses and you are ready to go away without doing my work. This does not behove you.'

O King! Though thus tempted by King Nimi, the Ṛṣi Vasiṣṭha went to the Indra's sacrifice. The King, too, became absent-minded and selected for the sacrifice the Ṛṣi Gautama. He then commenced his sacrificial ceremony close to the ocean by the side of the Himālayan range and gave profuse *dakśiṇās*. King Nimi was engaged in this sacrificial act for five thousand years. In this the *ṛtviks*, priests who perform a sacrifice on behalf of another, were worshipped with sufficient wealth and cows; they were extremely glad.

Then, when the five hundred years' sacrifice of Indra was completed, the Ṛṣi Vasiṣṭha came to see King Nimi's sacrifice and waited there to see the King. The king was then asleep, so the servants did not awake him from his sleep, and the King did not come to the Ṛṣi. Feeling insulted at this, the Mahārṣi Vasiṣṭha became infuriated with rage. Not seeing the King, he became very angry; and subject to this, he cursed the King: 'When I am your lifelong *guru*, especially when I prohibited you and you have forsaken me and selected another *guru* and by your sheer force you are initiated, then be devoid of your body. Let your body fall off today!'

43-50. Vyāsa said: "The King's attendants, hearing thus the curse given by Vasiṣṭha to the King, instantly awoke him from his sleep and informed him that 'Ṛṣi Vasiṣṭha not seeing you, became very angry.' King Nimi, quite sinless, went then to the angry Vasiṣṭha and humbly spoke to him the following reasonable words, pregnant with meaning.

'O knower of *dharma!* I am your *yajamāna;* though I repeatedly requested you to perform my sacrifice, yet you quit me out of covetousness and went somewhere else. I cannot be charged with any fault. You are the foremost of Brāhmaṇas; and knowing that contentment is the substance of your *dharma*, did you not feel ashamed to do this blameable act? You are the son of Brahmā; and being versed in the *Vedas* and *Vedāṅgas*, you are yet unaware of the subtle and very difficult nature of the Brāhmaṇic religion. Now you want to cast your own fault on my shoulders and trying in vain to curse me. Anger is more to be blamed than *cāndāla!* The wise men should overcome it by all means. When you, infuriated with rage, have been able to curse me for nothing, then I now curse you, "Let your this body, inflamed with anger, drop off."

O King! Thus the King cursed the Muni and the Muni cursed the King; and both of them were therefore very sorry.

51-52. Vasiṣṭha then became troubled with cares, took shelter of Brahmā and informed him about the great curse given by King Nimi. He said: 'Father! The King has cursed me saying, "Let your body fall off today.'

Now the great trouble due to the falling off of the body has arisen. What am to do now?

53-69. O Father! Kindly tell me from whom shall I take my birth, and take such means as I can get a body like what I have now. Also by Your unbounded power, do so that I can retain the knowledge in that body as I have at present; you are fully competent to do this.'

O King! Hearing thus the words of Vasiṣṭha, Brahmā spoke thus to his dear son: 'Go and enter into the *tejas* (essence) of Mitrā Varuṇa and remain contented; then you will get, in due time, a body not born of any womb and you will be again religious, truthful, knower of the *Vedas*, all-knowing and worshipped by all; there is no doubt about this.'

When Brahmā said this, the Mahārṣi Vasiṣṭha bowed down to the Grandsire, and after circumambulating him, went to the abode of Varuṇa. Then he quit his excellent body, and with his subtle body, the part of his *jīva* entered into the body of Mitrā Varuṇa. Then once on a time Urvaśī, exquisitely beautiful and lovely, surrounded by her comrades, went wilfully into the abode of Varuṇa. Mitrā-Varuṇa, the two Devas became very passionate to see that Apsarā, the celestial nymph endowed with youth and beauty; and being enchanted with the arrows of Cupid, and being senseless, addressed to the Deva Kanyā Urvaśī, beautiful in all her parts, thus:

'O lovely one! Seeing you, we are very much troubled with the arrows of Cupid; O beautiful one! Select us and remain and enjoy here at your pleasure.' When they said thus, Urvaśī became attached to them; and under their control, began to stay in the house of Mitrā Varuṇa. When Urvaśī began to remain there, strongly attached to them, the semen of Mitrā Varuṇa dropped in an uncovered jar. And the two beautiful sons of the Ṛṣis were born out of that; Agasti was the first child and Vasiṣṭha the second. Thus, out of the semen of Mitrā Varuṇa, the two ascetics were born. The first Agasti turned out a great ascetic in his childhood and resorted to the forest; Ikṣvāku the best of Kings, selected Vasiṣṭha as his family priest.

O King! Ikṣvāku, the best of Kings, nursed him for the welfare of his own line; the more so, because he knew that he was the Muni Vasiṣṭha; and thus he was very pleased with him.

O Janamejaya! Thus I have described to you about Vasiṣṭha getting another body due to the curse of Nimi, and have also described his rebirth in Mitrā-Varuṇa's family.

Here ends the Fourteenth Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the birth of Vasiṣṭha from Mitrā Varuṇa in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the Mahā Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XV—Nimi gets another body

1. Janamejaya said: "The getting back of another similar body by Vasiṣṭha is certainly described by you. Now tell me how King Nimi got another body."

2-31. Vyāsa said: "O King! Ṛṣi Vasiṣṭha got back his body; but King Nimi did not get back his body that had been cursed by Vasiṣṭha. The priests engaged at the sacrifice by Nimi began to consider, when the Ṛṣi Vasiṣṭha cursed him, in the following way: 'Oh! What a wonderful thing is this? Before the sacrifice is complete, King Nimi has been cursed; this is against what we had expected; what can we do? What is inevitable must come to pass; how can we thwart it?'

By various *mantrams*, they kept alive the body of the King in which breathing was still going on a little; and they prevented the body from decaying by worshipping the body with various *mantra-śaktis* and kept it in a stationary state. When the sacrificial ceremony was completed, the Ṛṣis began to praise the gods with hymns, whereon the Devas became pleased and came to that spot. When the Munis informed the Devas fully of the condition of the King's body, the Devas spoke to the sorrowful King thus: 'O performer of good vows! We are all pleased with your sacrifice; now ask boons from us. O King! You ought to get an excellent birth as the fruit of performing this sacrifice. So ask what body, the body of a Deva or of a man,

you desire. Or you can ask, if you like, for another similar body, that your priest Bṛhaspati has got after quitting his first body, whereby he has become proud and is now staying in the *loka* of Yama.'

O King! At these words King Nimi was very glad and spoke to them thus: 'O Devas! I have no aspiration for a body that is always liable to destruction; I therefore want to reside on the top of the eyelids of all the beings. Therefore I ask this boon: that I be able to move in the shape of *vāyu* (air) on the top of the eyes of all the beings.' Thus said, the Devas spoke to the soul of Nimi: 'O King! Pray to the most auspicious Deity, the Devī, the Highest Goddess. She has been pleased with this sacrifice; therefore your prayer will certainly be granted.'

Hearing this, the King began to pray with various hymns with intense devotion, in tremulous voice, to the Devī. The Devī became pleased and appeared before him. Seeing Her shining like a crore of suns and looking exceedingly lovely and beautiful, all the persons there became very happy. They began to think themselves as very blessed and as having done all that they had to do. Knowing the Devī Bhagavatī was pleased, the King asked this boon from her: 'O Devī! Give me that knowledge, pure and simple, whereby final liberation is obtained. Also, I may be able to reside on the top of the eyes of all the beings.'

The Devī, the Lord of the Devas, the Mother of the world being highly pleased, said thus: 'O King! At the expiry of your *prārabdha-karma*, you will acquire pure knowledge and you will reside on the tops of the eyes in the shape of *vāyu*, and through your residing there the beings will blink, open and close their eyes. The men, beasts, and birds will blink due to your residing there; but the Immortals will always remain with a steadfast gaze; they will not blink."

Thus granting him the boon and addressing all the Munis the Bhagavatī, the Highest Deity, disappeared. When the Devī disappeared from their sight, the Munis then thought much and they took the body of King Nimi to burn it duly. For the sake of getting a son from Nimi, the high-souled

Munis performed a *homa* ceremony, offering oblations to the fire and placing a piece of Arani wood on his body began to utter *mantrams* and burned his body. When the woods were thus burned, a son endowed with all auspicious signs, looking like a second Nimi was born to them. As this son was born due to the burning of the Aranis, the boy was named Mithi, and as it came out of the body of Janaka, the boy was named Janaka. O King! As King Nimi lost his body, i.e., became Videha through the curse of Vasiṣṭha, all his descendants were known as Videha. Thus the son of Nimi was well known as the King Janaka. He built a beautiful city on the banks of the Ganges; the city became famous also by his name Janakapuri. The King Janaka beautified this city with many forts, arcades, markets and many nice buildings and palaces; and his city was full of wealth and grains. O King! All the Kings of this line became famous by the name of Janaka and all were endowed with the Supreme Knowledge and known as Videha. O King! I have now described to you the story of King Nimi who got disembodiment (*videhatva*) out of the curse."

32-35. The King said: "O Bhagavān! You have described the cause why King Nimi was cursed; but my mind has grown very doubtful and restless on hearing it. The Ṛṣi Vasiṣṭha was the son of Brahmā and the best of the Brāhmaṇas; especially he was the royal priest; how was it, then, that he was cursed by the King! Why did not King Nimi forgive him, as he was his *guru* and a Brāhmaṇa? Why he became angry, even though he performed such a great auspicious sacrifice? He was born of the family of Ikṣvāku and knew well the truths of religion; then how was it that he became subject to anger and cursed his own *guru* Brāhmaṇa?"

36-46. Vyāsa said: "O King! It is very hard and rare for the persons not possessed of self-restraint to forgive; especially when one is fully capable, it is very rare to find one in the three worlds who can forgive. He who has forsaken all attachments and has conquered hunger and sleep and is always engaged in *yoga* practice, even that ascetic Muni is not capable to conquer completely lust, anger and greed and *ahaṅkāra*, the passions raging in the mortal coil. None existed before in this whole world who conquered

his passions! None exists now and none will be born ever after. Hardly will be seen any in this earth, or the Heavens, or the *loka* of Brahmā or in Vaikuṇṭha, even in Kailāsa, that has conquered completely his passions! What can be said in regard to the ordinary mortals of this earth when the sons of Brahmā, the Mahārṣis, ascetics, Ṛṣis are all pierced by the *sāttva, rājas* or *tāmo-guṇas*. Behold! Kapila was the knower of *śaṅkhyā*, always engaged in *yoga* practices, and a pure and holy soul; yet, by a strange combination of Fate, he became angry and burnt to ashes the sons of the King Sagara. O King! Out of *ahaṅkāra*, these three worlds are created; therefore this world and *ahaṅkāra* are related to each other as effect and cause; how then can the *jīvas* that are born of this *saṁsāra* extricate themselves from this *ahaṅkāra?* Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa are also pierced by those three *guṇas;* different feelings are seen in their different bodies. Therefore it need hardly be said that the maṇifestation of the pure *sāttva-guṇa* alone is not to be seen in any of the human beings; for the three *guṇas* reside in a mixed way in all persons. Sometimes the *sāttva* preponderates; sometimes the *rājas* and sometimes the *tāmas* preponderates. Sometimes they reside together, the three balancing one other.

47-63. O King! Only that Eternal Highest Puruṣa is undecaying and untainted, and can hardly be measured or seen by all the beings. That Highest Soul, the Highest of the High, is *nirguṇa,* devoid of the three *guṇas*. She who resides in all beings and is hardly knowable by the less-intellectual persons, that Highest Śakti, the incarnation of Brahman, is also *nirguṇa,* void of attributes. Paramātmā, the Highest Soul, and the Highest Force are also One; their Forms are nondifferent. When such knowledge arises, then the *jīvas* can be free from all sins, faults and blemishes. From that knowledge comes liberation; this is sounded in the *Vedānta-śāstra* like *dindima-śabda,* thousands of small drums. He who comes to know That is freed from the endless cycle of birth and death composed of the three *guṇas;* there is no doubt about this.

O King! Knowledge is of two kinds. The first kind comes from sound; this comes out of the knowledge of the meaning of the *Vedas* by the help of

intellect. But this is full of fancies, aguments and doubts—some of which are bad and some are good. The beings are led into errors by these discussions; errors cause destruction of intellect; and when the intellect is gone, the knowledge also goes away with it. Whereas the second kind of knowledge comes from intention or feeling within the depths of heart and brain and is called *aparoksa-jñāṇa*. This knowledge is very rare to the beings. When one comes in contact with a *sadguru*, a realized teacher, then one gets this *aparokṣa-jñāṇa*. From the sound knowledge, no successful results can issue; and, therefore it cannot give *aparokṣa-jñāṇa*. Hence great effort is to be made for getting this *aparokṣa-jñāṇa*. O King! As darkness cannot be destroyed merely by talking of light without lighting any lamp, so the knowledge of sound merely cannot destroy the darkness within. That *karma* (action) which does not lead to bondage is called True Karma, and that Knowledge which leads to liberation is the True Knowledge. Other actions are only meant for one's own selfish enjoyment and other knowledge is merely skill in the arts. Good behavior, doing good to others, having no anger, forgiveness, patience, and contentment are the best brilliant fruits of True Knowledge.

O King! Without knowledge, without asceticism, and without the *yoga* practices, lust and other passions can never be destroyed. The minds of the *jīvas* are naturally restless and without control; all beings are completely under the sway of their minds; thus they roam on the surface of the earth as good, middling and bad. Lust, anger, etc., orginate from this mind; and when mind is conquered, then those feelings can no more arise. O King! Therefore it was that Yayāti forgave when Śukrāchārya did wrong before. King Nimi could not forgive Vasiṣṭha in the same way. Yayāti; the best of kings, though cursed by Śukrāchārya the son of Bhṛgu, did not curse in return but he took upon himself old age. O King! Some kings are naturally peaceful, whereas some other kings are wicked by their nature. Therefore in this matter, whose fault is this, how can we ascertain? See! In ancient times the Haihayas, out of their greed of wealth, and being thus insensible destroyed completely, out of anger, the Brāhmaṇa priests of the family of Bhṛgu. What more than this that those Kṣatriyas did not consider the sin

brahmahatyā; rather out of their dire anger, they cut to pieces the sons of those Brāhmaṇas that were in embryos in their mothers' wombs.

Here ends the Fifteenth Chapter in the Sixth Skandha on the Nimi's getting a new body, in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the Mahā Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVI—Prelude to the Haihaya and Bhārgava affairs

1-5. Janamejaya said: "In whose family were born those Kṣatriya Haihayas who killed in ancient times the Bhārgavas, disregardless of the sin incurred in killing a Brāhmaṇa? O Grandsire! Never do good persons become angry without a serious cause; therefore kindly state why they got angry. How was the enmity caused between them and the priests? As far as I can think, the cause is not so simple a one as led to this enmity between the Kṣatriyas and the priests. Otherwise why then would they slay the offenseless Brāhmaṇas, fit to be worshipped? and how was it that the Kṣatriyas, though they were so very powerful, did not fear to commit a sin? O Muni! can any Kṣatriya kill a Brāhmaṇa, worthy of the highest respect, merely on a trifling cause? A great doubt has thus arisen in my mind. Describe to me, then, how this happened."

6. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! Vyāsa, the son of Satyavatī, became very pleased when he was asked this question by Janamejaya, and, recollecting the whole course of events regarding the Haihayas, began to narrate it."

7-22. Vyāsa said: "O son of Parīkṣit! I will now narrate that wonderful story of old that I know fully; now hear this very attentively. In ancient times there was a King named Kārtavīryārjuna of the family of Haihaya. He was of thousand hands, powerful, and always ready to observe religious duties. He was the incarnation of Hari, the disciple of Mahārṣi Dattātreya and the worshipper of the Supreme Force, Ādyā-Śakti). He was well known as a perfect adept in the *yoga* practices and of a very charitable disposition. But this King was the client of the Brāhmaṇas of the Bhārgava clan. He was always devoted to performing sacrifices, exceedingly religious, and always

engaged in making gifts. So many a time did he perform the great sacrifices and gave a profuse quantity of wealth to the Bhārgavas. Due to the gifts and presents of Kārtavīrya, the Bhārgava priests became possessed of many horses, gems and jewels, and so became wealthy and prosperous on the surface of this earth. O King! When Kārtavīryārjuna, the best of Kings, left the mortal coil and got up to Heaven, his descendants became entirely devoid of wealth by the indomitable influence of Time. Now, on a certain occasion, the Haihayas had to perform certain actions which necessitated a vast sum of money; they came to the Bhārgavas and humbly prayed for a very large amount of wealth. But the Brāhmaṇas, out of their greed of money, replied they had no money and thus they did not give any money whatsoever. Rather the Bhārgavas thought that the Haihayas would perforce take their wealth, and fearing thus, some of them buried all their valuables underneath the ground; and others gave as charities to the Brāhmaṇas. The greedy Bhārgavas, bewildered with fear, thus transferred all their properties elsewhere, quit their homes and fled away to mountains and other places. The greedy Brāhmaṇas did not give any wealth to their Yajamānas (their clients) though they saw them very much distressed; but they fled away out of fear to mountains and fastnesses where they found shelter. At last the Haihayas, the best of the Kṣatriyas, became very sorry until at last, for the sake of their good actions, they went to the Bhārgavas' houses for the sake of money and found they had quit their homes and fled away; their homes were all vacant. Then they began to dig underneath their houses for money and got some of the money thus. Then the Kṣatriyas began to labor hard and got hordes of money from underneath the ground. Next they raided upon other Brāhmaṇas' houses, dug and excavated and searched for more money. The Brāhmaṇas were helpless and crying, all took their refuge out of fear, under the Bhārgavas.

23-42. The Kṣatriyas made an exhaustive search of the Brāhmaṇas' houses and got lots of money. They then charged the Brāhmaṇas as having had spoken falsehood and they became very angry, and killed the Brāhmaṇas with arrows who took their refuge. O King! The Haihayas were so very angry at that time that they went wherever the Bhārgavas took their shelter,

cut asunder the foetuses in the wombs of the Bhārgavas' wives, and thus they roamed all over on the surface of the earth. Wherever they saw any Bhārgava, be he a minor, or a youth or a old man, at once they killed him with sharp arrows, disregarding the sin *brahmahatyā*. When the Bhārgavas were thus all killed, then they caught hold of their wives that were pregnant and destroyed their wombs. When the vicious Kṣatriyas thus destroyed the lives in their wombs, the helpless women began to cry like the fear-stricken ewes.

Then the other Munis, the inhabitants of the sacred places of pilgrimages, seeing the Haihaya Kṣatriyas inflamed with anger, said: 'O Kṣatriyas! Quit your terrible anger towards the Brāhmaṇas. Being the best of the Kṣatriyas, you are killing the foetus in the wombs of the pregnant Brāhmaṇa ladies! You are doing, no doubt, a very vicious and unjustifiable act! You should know that an act, very bad or very good, bears fruit in this life; therefore those that seek their welfare should entirely omit this exceedingly hateful and vicious act.'

Then the exceedingly angry Haihayas told the merciful ascetics: 'You all are saints; therefore you do not know the real import of what are called vicious acts. Those Bhārgavas, thoroughly dexterous in cunning pursuits, deceived our large-hearted forefathers and stole away all their gold and jewels, as thieves do with a passerby on a road. These Bhārgavas are cheats, vain persons and their persuasions are like herons. A great act had to be done by us and we wanted money at 25 percent interest with all the becoming humility; yet they did not give us the money; rather seeing on their face their clients distressed and sorrowful, they spoke that they had no money, no money and then they remained silent.

True, they got all their money from Kārtavīrya; but it may be questioned why they stored it? Why did not they perform sacrifices with that? Why did not they give sufficient money to the other priests (Yāyakas) that did the sacrifices? Never should any Brāhmaṇa hoard his money; he should give that in charity and enjoy at his pleasure. O twice-born! In amassing wealth, there exist four fears: fear from the thieves and robbers, fear from

the King, fear from dreadful fire accidents, and especially great terrible fear from the cheats. This is the nature of wealth; it leaves its preserver. See, moreover, when a hoarder of money dies, he certainly has to quit it. If a wealthy man, before dying, performs sacrifices and other good pious acts by his earned money, then he certainly gets good states in future; otherwise, he quits his wealth to no purpose and earns a bad state in his future life; there is no doubt about this.

We humbly wanted to pay a quarter interest and asked money for the performance of a great act; yet they, the greedy ones, were doubtful about our promise; and though our priests, they did not give us the money. O Mahārṣis! Gift, enjoyment and destruction, these are the three courses which any wealth has to pass through; those persons that have done good deeds enjoy their wealth and give as charity, and thus they make a good and real use of their money; and of those that are vicious, their wealth goes away in ruin and to no purpose. He who does not enjoy nor give in charity but is only clever in hoarding and who is a miser, the Kings punish him by all means, that man who cheats himself and who suffers only pains and miseries. For that reason, we are now ready to kill those Brāhmaṇas, the vilest of men, the cheats, though they are our *gurus*. O Mahārṣis! You are great persons; therefore you do not be angry after you have come to know all these facts.'

43-51. Vyāsa said: "Thus consoling the Munis with reasonable words, the Haihayas began to roam about in search of the wives of the Bhārgavas. The Bhārgava wives were very much distressed with fear and became very lean and thin. They fled away to the Himālayan Mountains weeping and crying, and trembling with fear. Thus the Bhārgavas were being killed by those vicious greedy Haihayas, infuriated with anger, as they liked. O King! This greed is the greatest enemy of a man, residing in his own body; this greed is the root of all evils, of all sins. Life is in danger due to covetousness. It is due to this greed that quarrels ensue amongst the several castes, the Brāhmaṇas, etc., and that the human beings are very much troubled with thirst after worldly enjoyments. This greed makes a man forsake all his

religious rites and long-existing customs and observances of his family; and it is due to this avarice of gold that men kill their fathers, mothers, brothers, friends, *gurus*, sons, acquaintances, sisters, sisters-in-law and others. Really when a man is bent on avarice, nothing heinous remains that cannot be done by him. This greed is a more powerful enemy than anger, lust and egotism. O King! Men abandon their lives for their greed; what more can be said than this? So one should be always alert on this. O King! your forefathers, the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, were all religious and they followed the path of virtue and goodness. Yet they all were ruined simply for this greed. See! The dreadful fight and separation amongst the relatives took place where there were the high-souled persons like Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Kṛpāchārya, Karṇa, Vahlika, Bhīmasena, Yudhiṣṭhira, Arjuna and Keśava, only through the avaricious feelings. In this battle Bhīṣma, Droṇa and the sons of the Pāṇḍavas were all slain; the brothers and fathers were all slain in battle. Thus what improper acts and mischiefs can there be that cannot be committed when the human minds are overpowered by this greed? O King! The vicious Haihayas slew the Bhārgavas all through this avarice.

Here ends the Sixteenth Chapter in the Sixth Skandha on the incidents preliminary to the Haihaya and Bhārgava affairs in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVII—Continuance of the family of Bhṛgu

1-3. Janamejaya said: "O Muni! How did the Bhārgava wives cross this endless sea of troubles, and how was the family of Bhṛgu re-established on the surface of this earth? And what did the greedy Haihayas, the vilest of the Kṣatriyas, do after they killed the Bhārgavas? Describe all these in detail and satisfy my curiosity. O Thou, ocean of austerities! I am not satisfied with the drink of your nectar-like words, very holy and leading to happiness in this world and to good merits in the next."

4-28. Vyāsa said: "O King! I will now narrate to you the sin-destroying virtuous story how the Bhārgava wives crossed their great hardships and

the ocean of troubles, very difficult to cross. The Bhārgava wives, when they were very much harassed by the Haihayas, went to the Himālayas overwhelmed with terror and disappointment. There on that mountain they erected an earthen image of Śrī Gaurī Devī by the banks of the Ganges, worshipped Her and firmly resolved to die, began to fast. The Devī Jagadambikā appeared to those religious women in their dreams and said: 'A son will be born of My essence to one of you from one of her thighs; that son will redress all your wants.' Thus speaking, the Devī Bhagavatī disappeared. Those women when they woke up were very glad; one of them that appeared very clever, becoming very much anxious out of the fear of the Kṣatriyas, preserved the foetus in one of her thighs for the propagation of the family. Her body became luminous; she then fled, overwhelmed with terror. The Kṣatriyas, seeing that Brāhmaṇī, came quickly upon her and said: 'See! This pregnant Bhārgava wife is flying away hastily; seize her and take away her life.' Thus saying, all of them raised their axes and pursued her. Then that woman seeing them coming, wept out of fear. She cried, out of terror, for the preservation of the child in her womb; and the child seeing her mother helpless and distressed, trembling with fear and with tears in her eyes, having no one to protect her and awfully oppressed by the Kṣatriyas, as if a pregnant deer has been attacked by a lion and is crying about, angrily burst out of the thigh of his mother, and quickly came out like a second Sun. That good-looking boy took away the power of sight of those Kṣatriyas by his brilliant lustrous light; no sooner the Haihayas saw that boy than they got blind. Like those that are born blind; they then began to roam in the caves of mountains and thought within themselves what an evil turn of Fate had overtaken them!

They thought thus: 'Oh! The mere sight of that boy has turned us blind; what a great wonder is this! Certainly this is due to the influence of the Brāhmaṇī wife; this is, no doubt, the great effect of her virtue of chastity. We have greatly oppressed the Bhārgava women. They have become very sorry and distressed; now we cannot tell what more evils do these women, of true resolve, inflict on us!' Thus pondering, those Kṣatriyas deprived of their eyes, helpless and their minds bewildered, took refuge of those

Brāhmaṇa ladies. The ladies, seeing them again come, were the more terrified; but those Kṣatriyas bowed down before them with folded hands for the restoration of their sight and said: 'O Mother! We are your servants. Be gracious unto us. O auspicious ones! We are vicious Kṣatriyas; O Mothers! What a great amount of offenses we have committed to you! O beautiful ones! We have become blind, no sooner we have seen you. O angry ones! No more we can see your lotus-like faces, as if we are born blind; O Mother! The spirit of your asceticism is so very wonderful! We are sinners; therefore by no means we can get our sight; therefore we have taken refuge unto you all; better give us back our eyesight and preserve our honor. O Mother! Blindness is more dreadful than death; therefore do you show your mercy on us. Be pleased unto us and restore our eyesight and make us your slaves; no sooner we get back our sights, we will cease from these vicious acts and go to our homes. In future, we will never commit such heinous acts; from today we all become servants of the Bhārgavas and we will serve them. Forgive all our sins that we committed unconsciously; we promise that in future, there will no more be any enmity between the Bhārgavas and Kṣatriyas. O good-looking ones! You pass your days happily with your sons; we ever bow down before you. O auspicious ones! Be graciously pleased unto us; no more we will cherish any inimical feelings towards you.'

29-44. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Bhārgava lady heard their words and was thunderstruck. Seeing those Kṣatriyas bowing down before her, blind and distressed, consoled them and said, 'O Kṣatriyas! I have not taken away your sights nor am I displeased in any way with you. Now hear what is the real cause. This child of Bhārgava, born of my thigh, is exceedingly angry towards you and has therefore made your eyesight still and to no purpose. For the greed of wealth, you have slain the close relatives of this boy, who were quite innocent and virtuous ascetics, and you have slain their children that were in their mothers' wombs; this boy has come to know all those things. O children! When you were slaying the children of the Bhārgavas in their mothers' wombs, I then bore within my thighs this child for one hundred years. This son of mine though as yet in the womb, has mastered

all the *Vedas* within so very short a time for the propagation of the Bhārgava clan. Now this Bhārgava son is infuriated with anger for your slaying his father and is now ready to kill you all. My son, whose divine effulgence has destroyed your eyesight, is born of grace of the Highest Goddess, the Bhagavatī Bhuvaneśvarī; therefore do not consider this boy as an ordinary being. Now bow down with humility before this my son Aurvya, born from the thighs; this son may be pleased by your bowing down and may restore you your eyesight.'

Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the words of the Brāhmaṇa lady, the Haihayas began to praise the boy with hymns. With great humility, they bowed down to the best of the Munis, born of the thighs. The Ṛṣi Aurvya then became pleased and spoke thus to the Haihayas who were deprived of their eyesight: 'Better go back to your own homes. O Kings! and read these following words derived from my story. Whatever is inevitable and created by the hands of gods must come to pass. Knowing this, no one ought to be sorrowful on any such matters. Let you all regain your eyesight as before, forego your anger and go to your own homes respectively at your own will. Let the Ṛṣis, too, get peace and happiness as before.' When the Mahārṣi Aurvya ordered thus, the Haihayas got back their eyesight and went at their leisure to their own homes; on the other hand the Brāhmaṇa lady went to her own hermitage with her Divine-spirited child and began to nourish him. O King! Thus I have described to you the story of the killing of the Bhārgavas and how the Kṣatriyas, actuated by greed, did so very vicious acts."

45-48. Janamejaya said: "O Ascetic! Hearing this exceedingly heart-rending act of the Kṣatriyas, I come to understand that greed is the sole cause of it, and both the parties suffered so much simply out of this insatiable greed. O King of Munis! I want to ask you one more question in regard to this point. How the sons of the Kings came to be known Haihayas in this world? Amongst the Kṣatriyas, some are called Yādavas for they ware descended from the family of Yadu; some were known as Bhārata, for they were descended from Bhārata. But was some king named Haihaya born before in

their family, or were they known as such on account of other actions? I desire to hear of it. Kindly describe this to me and oblige."

49-56. Vyāsa said: "O King! I am describing in detail to you of the origin of the Haihayas. Hear. The sins are destroyed and the merits accrue on hearing this story. O King! Once on a time Revanta, the son of the Sun, very beautiful and of boundless luster, was going to Viṣṇu in Vaikuṇṭha, mounted on the beautiful Uccaiḥśravā, the jewel of horses. When he was going on horseback with a desire to see the God Viṣṇu, the Goddess Lakṣmī saw that child of the Sun. The Goddess Lakṣmī, born out of the churning of the ocean, on looking at the beautiful appearance of her brother Uccaiḥśravā, also born out of the churning of the ocean, became very much astonished and steadily gazed on him. Bhagavān Viṣṇu, capable to show both favor and disfavor, saw the beautiful Revanta, of good figure, coming on horseback; and lovingly asked Lakṣmī: 'O Beautiful One! Who is coming here on horseback, enchanting to the three worlds?' At that time, the Goddess Lakṣmī was accidentally looking intently on the horse; so she did not reply, though repeatedly asked by Bhagavān.

57-68. The Lakṣmī Devī, always restless, was very much intent on the horse and was enchanted and She was looking steadily with great affection at the horse. Seeing this, Bhagavān became angry and said: 'O Beautiful-eyed One! What you are looking at so intently? Are you so much enchanted with the sight of the horse that you are not speaking to me a single word, though I am repeatedly asking you so often? You lovingly dwell on all the objects; hence your name is Ramā; your mind is also very restless, therefore you would be known as Canchalā Devī (the restless goddess). O Auspicious One! You are restless like ordinary women; you can never stay steadily for a certain time at any one place. While sitting before Me, you are enchanted with the sight of a horse; then you be born as a mare in that world of men, full of dreadful troubles, on the surface of the earth.'

The Goddess Lakṣmī became very much affrightened at the sudden curse given by Hari, a matter as it were ordained by the Devas, and began to cry aloud, shuddering with pain and sorrow. Lakṣmī Devī, of sweet smiles,

frightened, then bowed down with great humility to her own Lord Nārāyaṇa and said thus: 'O Deva of the Devas! O Govinda! You are the Lord of this world and the Ocean of mercy. O Keśava! Why have You inflicted on me so dreadful a curse for such a minor fault of mine? O Lord! I never saw You before so very angry. Alas! Where has now gone that affection, so natural and undying, that You showed towards me! O Lord! It is not proper to hurl a thunderbolt on one's own relations; but it is advisable to cast it on the enemies. I am always fit for receiving boons from You. Why have You made me now an object, fit for curse. O Govinda! I will quit this life in Your presence. I will never be able to live separated from You. O Lord! Be graciously pleased and say when shall I be free from this dreadful curse and regain Your happy companionship?'

69. Bhagavān said: 'O Devī! When you will get a son in the world like Me, you will no doubt come again to be my companion.'

Here ends the Seventeenth Chapter on the continuance of the family of Bhṛgu in the Sixth Skandha in the MahāPurāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVIII—Origin of the Haihaya Dynasty

1-5. Janamejaya said: "How did the Goddess Lakṣmī, the daughter of the ocean, come to be born as a mare, when cursed by Bhagavān in His moment of anger, and what did Revanta do at that time? In what country was the Devī born as a mare, and how did She pass Her time alone like one whose husband had gone abroad? O Muni! How long and in what forest unfrequented by persons did she pass Her time, thus deprived of the companionship of her husband, and what did she do at that time? When was she reconciled with her husband Vāsudeva? and how did she get a son, when she lived in a state of separation from her husband? O best of the *āryas!* I am very curious to hear this excellent story. So describe this in full detail to me.'

6. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! Thus questioned by Janamejaya, the Dvaipāyan Muni began to recite the story in its full details."

7-24. Vyāsa said: "O King! I will now describe to you the pleasing story of the *Purāṇas* in a clear distinct language; hear. Revanta, the son of the Sun, became terrified to see Vāsudeva, the Deva of the Devas cursing Lakṣmī Devī and after bowing down to Janārdan, the Lord of the world, went off. Seeing the anger of Viṣṇu, the Lord of the world, he went quickly to his father and informed him of the curse delivered by Nārāyaṇa to Goddess Lakṣmī. And then Lakṣmī Devī, the lotus-eyed, thus cursed, got the permission of Nārāyaṇa and with a grieved heart bowed down to Him and came down to the world of mortals. She took the form of a mare and went to the spot where the wife of the Sun named Chhāyā practiced her asceticism in ancient times. The place was the confluence of the river Kālindi and the Tamasā, and decorated with lovely forests and trees situated north of the mountain named Suparnāksa, yielding all desires. There she meditated with her whole heart on the auspicious Mahādeva Śaṅkara, the giver of all desires, thus: 'That Mahādeva is holding the Triśūla (trident) in his arms; His forehead is adorned with beautiful cooling half-Moon; He has five faces, each face having three eyes; His throat is colored blue; He has ten arms; His body is white like camphor; He wears a tiger's skin; His upper garment is of elephant's skin; and snakes are his holy thread; He is holding the one-half of the body of Gaurī and his neck is adorned with garlands of human skulls.'

Goddess Lakṣmī, the daughter of the ocean, assuming the form of a mare, thus practiced severe asceticism in that place of pilgrimage. O King! With a feeling of intense dispassion (*vairāgyam*) towards the worldly things, She spent one thousand divine years in the meditation on Mahādeva, the God of the Gods. After that period, the Highest Lord Mahādeva, mounted on His bull, came there with His consort Pārvatī and appeared before the Lakṣmī Devī, perceptible by his eyes. Appearing thus with His host of His own persons, He then spoke to Lakṣmī, dear to Hari, now practicing ascetism in the form of a mare:

'O Auspicious One! You are the Mother of this whole Universe and Your Husband is the Creator of these worlds, capable to give all desires. Why are You then practicing asceticism, when He is present? What is the cause of this? O Devī! Why are You offering hymns to praise me, instead of to Vāsudeva Śrī Hari, Who is capable to yield enjoyment and final liberation, and Who is the Preserver and the Lord of this world. O Devī! Work should be done according to the authority of the *Vedas;* it is stated in the *Vedas* that the husband is the lord of a woman; therefore it is never advisable to fix one's mind entirely on another person. The eternal *dharma* of women is to serve their husbands; whether the husband be a saint or a sinner, the woman desirous of her welfare should serve her husband in every way. O Daughter of the Ocean! Your husband Nārāyaṇa is fit to be served by all and He is capable to yield all desires. Why are you then worshipping Me, and leaving the Lord of Goloka, the Deva of the Devas?'

25-32. Lakṣmī said: 'O Deva of the Devas! O seat of auspiciousness! I know that You are soon pleased with Your servant. My husband has cursed me. O ocean of mercy! Kindly save me from this curse. O Śambhu! When I informed my husband of my mental agonies, graciously and mercifully He then pointed out how I might be freed of this curse thus: "O Kāmale! When Your son will be born, then You will be freed of this curse and will, no doubt, come back and live in this Heaven of Vaikuṇṭha." Thus spoken, I have come in this hermitage to make *tapas* and to worship Thee, knowing that Thou art Bhagavān, the Lord of Bhavānī, the Lord of all and the giver of all desires. O Lord of the Devas! How can I get a son without intercourse with My husband? Though I am guiltless, my husband has forsaken me and is living in Vaikuṇṭha. O Maheśvara! Thou art doing good to all persons; and if Thou art pleased with me, then grant me a boon. O Lord! I know full well that there is no distinction between Him and Thee. O Lord of Girījā! This truth I have come to learn from my husband. O Hara! You are the same thing that He is, and what is He is the same as You; there is not the least doubt about this. O Thou, full of auspiciousness! Recognising the Sameness without any distinction between Him and Thee, I am

meditating on Thee. Had it been otherwise, then I would certainly have been guilty when I take Thy refuge and meditate on Thee.'

33-36. Śaṅkara said: 'O Devī, the daughter of the Ocean! Tell truly before me how you have been able to realize the identity between Him and Me. The Devas, Munis and the Mahārṣis, versed in the *Vedas*, get their understandings baffled by wrong argumentation and never realize the identity without any difference between Us. Almost everywhere you will perceive that many of My devotees blame Me. Specially in this Kali-yuga due to the influence of Time, this happens to a very great extent in many cases. O Auspicious One! Let that go! How have you come to know this matter, which is difficult even for the liberal-minded persons to comprehend? Know that this perception of the identity between Me and Hari is very rare.'

37-38. Vyāsa said: "O King! When Mahādeva asked thus with great pleasure, the Devī Kāmalā, the darling of Hari, gladly replied the essence of the matter to Mahādeva.

39-43. Lakṣmī said: 'O Deva of the Devas! One day Bhagavān Viṣṇu, seated in the Padmāsana posture, was immersed in deep meditation. I was very much astonished at this. When His meditation was over and He was in a pleasant mood, I asked Him with great humility, "O Deva of the Devas! I know that You are the Lord of the world and Master of this whole Universe; when Brahmā and the other Devas were united and churned the great ocean, I came out of the waters and looked all around to know who is the superior one whom I can select as My husband. And then, thinking You as the superior to all the Devas, I accepted You as My husband. Now whose meditation are You doing? A great doubt has thus occurred in my mind. O Lord! You are my most Beloved; now disclose to me your innermost desire and thought.'

44-49. Viṣṇu said: 'O Beloved! Hear now, whom I am meditating on. I am meditating in the lotus of My heart on that Mahādeva Maheśvara, the Highest of all the Devas. Mahādeva, the Deva of the Devas, of indomitable

prowess, sometimes meditates on Me and sometimes I meditate on the Lord of the Deva, Śaṅkara, the Destroyer of Tripurā. I am dear to Śiva as his life is dear to him, and Śaṅkara is similarly dear to me. The hearts of us both are attached to each other in the most secret way possible; therefore there is not the least difference betwixt us both. O large-eyed One! Those men who being my devotees hate Śaṅkara, certainly go to hell. I speak this very truly unto you.'

O Maheśvara! When I asked him this question when he was all alone, that Deva of the Devas, the Highest Viṣṇu thus said to me. Therefore I am meditating on You, knowing that You are His beloved. O Maheśa! Now find out means by which I can mix with My husband.'

50-59. Vyāsa said: "O King! Mahādeva, skilled in speech, hearing thus the words of Lakṣmī, consoled Her with sweet words and said: 'O Beautiful! Be peaceful; I am pleased with Your *tapasyā;* soon You will come in contact with Your husband. There is not the least doubt in this. When I will send Bhagavān, the Lord of the world, He will come before you in the shape of a horse to satisfy your desires. I will send the Madhusūdana, the Deva of the Devas, in such a manner as he will come in the form of a horse, passionately attached to you. O One of good eyebrows! Thus you will get a son equivalent to Nārāyaṇa; and the son will be the King on this earth and will be undoubtedly worshipped by all. O fortunate One! After you get your son, you will go to Vaikuṇṭha with Nārāyaṇa and will reside there as His Beloved. Your son will be famed by the name of Ekavīra; and from him will propagate the Haihaya dynasty on the earth. O Kāmale! You were blind by prosperity, and becoming passionate, you forgot the Devī Parameśvarī residing in your heart. Therefore you have experienced such a result. Therefore, to expiate that sin, take Her refuge by all means. O Devī! If your heart remained attached to the Highest Devī, the blissful Bhagavatī, your heart would never have got attached to the Uccaiḥśravā horse.'

Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus granting boons to Lakṣmī Devī, He with his consort Umā vanished away in her presence.

60-62. Kāmalā Devī, lovely in all respects, whose toenails are always rubbed by the gems on the coronets of the Devas, began to meditate on the lotus feet of Ambikā and in expectation of her beloved Hari, in the shape of a horse, praised and chanted hymns frequently to the Highest Goddess, in words choked with feelings of intense love.

Here ends the Eighteenth Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the origin of the Haihaya Dynasty in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIX—Origin of Haihayas from a Mare

1-3. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus granting the boon to the Goddess Lakṣmī, Śambhu quickly returned to the lovely Kailāśa, adorned with Apsarās, celestial nymphs, and frequented and served by the Gods. He then despatched his expert attendant Citrarūpa to Vaikuṇṭha to bring the purpose of Lakṣmī to a successful issue. He said to him thus: 'O Citrarūpa! Go to Hari and speak to him on My behalf that He shuld go and remove the sorrows of His distressed and bereaved wife, and thus make Her comfortable.'

4-9. Thus ordered, Citrarūpa started immediately and reached at once Vaikuṇṭha, the highest place, covered all over by the Vaiṣṇavas. The place was diversified with lots of various trees, with hundreds of lovely lakes, and echoed with sweet lovely sounds of swans, Kārandavas, peacocks, parrots, cuckoos and various other birds, and adorned with beautiful places, decked with flags and banners. It was filled with charming dancing, music and other artistic things. There were the lovely Bakula, Aśoka, Tilaka, Campaka and other trees; and the beautiful tree Mandāra looked beautiful and shed all around the sweet fragrance of its sweet flowers for a long distance. Thus seeing the lovely nice palace of Viṣṇu and the two doorkeepers Jāya and Vijāya standing with canes in their hands, Citrarūpa bowed down to them and said: 'Well! You go quickly and inform the

Supreme Soul Hari that a messenger has come under the orders of Bhagavān Śūlapānī, and is now waiting at His doors.'

10-18. Hearing his words, the intelligent Jāya went to Hari and, with folded hands, said: 'O Thou Ocean of Mercy! O Keśava! O Lord of Ramā! O Deva of the Devas! A messenger has come from the Lord of Bhavānī and is waiting at the doors. I do not not know on what important business he has come. Please order whether I will bring him before You or not.' On hearing the Jaya's words, Hari, aware of the inner feelings, knew at once the cause and said: 'O Jāya! Bring before me the messenger come from Rudra.' Thus hearing, Jāya called Śiva's servant, of a graceful form, and brought him to the presence of Janārdana. Citrarūpa, of variegated appearance, prostrated himself flat before Him in the form of a stick, stood up and remained with folded hands. Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, Whose carrier is Garuḍa, saw that servant of Śiva of variegated appearance and full of all humility, and became very much astonished. The Lord of Kāmalā then smiled and asked Citrarūpa: 'O Pure One! Is all well with Mahādeva, the Lord of the Devas and His other families and attendants? On what business has He sent you here? What does He want Me to do? Or tell Me if I have to do any other business of the gods.'

19-34. The messenger said: 'O Thou, the Knower of all that is within one's heart! There is nothing in this world hidden from Your knowledge; when is that which I will say unknown to you? O Thou, the Knower of present, past and future! I am now saying to you what Śambhu has told me to inform You. He has said: "O Lord! The Goddess Lakṣmī is Your dear consort. She, the daughter of the Ocean, and the Bestower of all success, though an object fit to be meditated by Yakṣas, Kinnaras, Naras and Immortals, is now undergoing severe penance at the confluence of Kalindī (Yamuṇā, the daughter of Kalinda) and the Tamasā. What is there in the three worlds that can be happy without that Mother of the worlds and the Giver of all desires? O Lotus-eyed One! What pleasure do You feel in abandoning Her? O All-pervading One! Even he who has no riches or who is very weak maintains his wife; then why have You, being the Lord of the worlds,

forsaken your wife, without any offense, Who is worshipped by the whole universe? O Lord of the world! What advice shall I give to You? He whose wife suffers in the world is blamed by his enemies. O Omnipresent One! Fie on his such a life! O Lord of the worlds! Your enemies' desires are satisfied when they see Her very miserable. They are laughing and mocking and saying: 'O Devī, Keśava has now forsaken You; You can spend happily your time with us now.' Therefore, O Lord of the Devas! bring that Lady back unto your palace and place Her unto your lap, Who is of good demeanor, beautiful *par excellence* and endowed with all auspicious signs. O Deva! Accept, please, your sweet-smiling wife and be happy. Though I am at present not in bereavement of My dear wife, yet when I remember my former state of bereavement, I feel very much trouble. O Lotus-eyed One! When Satī Devī, my beloved Wife, quit Her life in Dakṣa's house, I felt unbearable pain. O Keśava! Let no other body in this world suffer such pain. I now remember only the suffering and mental agonies that I felt on Her bereavement; I do not give it out to others. After a long time, practicing severe *tapasyā*, I got Her back in the form of Girijā, who felt herself burnt up as it were by the anger She felt on account of censure cast on Me in Dakṣa's house and thus quit Her life. O Murāri! What happiness You have felt in forsaking your dear wife and in remaining thus alone for one thousand years? Console your fortunate young wife with good teeth, and bring her back to your place. O Bhagavān! Lastly, the Goddess Bhavānī, the Originatrix of these worlds, told me to speak thus to you: "O Destroyer of Kaṁsa! Let nobody remain even, for a moment, without Lakṣmī, the Highest Goddess. O Long-lived One! You better assume the form of a horse and go and worship Her. Then have a child of yours in the womb of your sweet-smiling wife and bring her back to your house".'

35-42. Vyāsa said: "O ornament of Bhārata's race! Hearing thus the words of Citrarūpa, Bhagavān Hari told that he would do what Śaṅkara had told Him to do, and thus sent the messenger back to Śaṅkara. The messenger departing, Hari assumed the form of a beautiful horse and immediately left Vaikuṇṭha with passionate intent for the place where Lakṣmī was staying in the form of a mare and practicing Her austerities. Coming there, he saw

that the Devī Bimalā was staying in the form of a mare. The mare, too, seeing the horse form of her husband Govinda, recognized Him and, chaste as she was, remained there with astonishment and tears in her eyes. Then those two copulated on the famous confluence. The wife of Hari in the shape of a mare became pregnant and in due time, gave birth to a beautiful well-qualified child. Bhagavān then graciously smiled on her and spoke in words suited to the time, 'O Dear! Now quit this mare form and assume Your former appearance. O Lovely-eyed One! Let both of Us assume Our own forms and go to Vaikuṇṭha; and let your child remain in this place.'

43-48. Lakṣmī said: 'O Lord! How can I go leaving here this child, born of my womb? It is very difficult to quit the attachment for one's own child. Know this, O Lord! O High-souled One! This child is young and of small body; therefore he is quite incapable to protect himself. If I forsake him on the bank of this river, he will be an orphan, what will happen to him then? O Lotus-eyed One! My mind is now in full attachment towards him. How can I quit this helpless child and go?'

Then Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa resumed their divine bodies and mounted on the excellent *vimānas*, and the Devas began to praise them with hymns. When Nārāyaṇa expressed His desire to go, Kāmalā said: 'O Lord! You better take this child; I am unable to forsake him. O Lord! O Slayer of Madhu! This child is dearer to me than my life; see his body exactly resembles Yours. Therefore we would take this child with us to Vaikuṇṭha.'

49-54. Hari spoke: 'O Dear! You need not be sorry; let this child remain here happily; I have arranged for his preservation and safety. O Beautiful One! There is a great act to do in this world that will be executed by Your child. For this reason I am leaving him here. I am now describing to you the above story. The famous King Yayāti had a son named Turvasu; his father kept his name as Hari Varmā; he is known by this name. That king is now practicing asceticism for one hundred years for getting a son in a place of pilgrimage. O Lakṣmī! I have begot this son for him. I will go there and send the King here. O Beautiful-faced One! I will give this son to that King, desirous of an issue. He will take this son and go back to his house.'

55. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus consoling his beloved whose abode is in the lotus, and placing the child there in that position, He mounted on an excellent car with Lakṣmī and went to Vaikuṇṭha."

Here ends the Nineteenth Chapter in the Sixth Skandha on the origin of Haihayas from a mare in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XX—the Son born of Mare by Hari

1-2. Janamejaya said: "O Bhagavān! A great doubt has arisen in my mind on this subject. Who was it that took away that son, when both Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa left him in that forlorn state, in a forest without any person there to look after?"

3-11. Vyāsa said: "O King! No sooner Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa departed from that place, one Vidyādhara, named Campaka, mounting on a beautiful celestial car came there at his free will, sporting with a woman named Madanālasā. There they saw that one lovely child, exquisitely beautiful like a Deva's son, was playing alone as he liked. They then quickly descended from their chariot and picked him up. Vidyādhara became very glad, as a beggar becomes glad when he gets a hoard of jewels. On taking that newly born beautiful child like Cupid, Campaka gave it to the Devī Madanālasā. Madanālasā took it and became very much astonished, and her hairs stood on end. She clasped him to her bosom and kissed him frequently. O Bhārata! Taking that child on her lap as if her own child, Madanālasā embraced and kissed him and got the highest happiness. Then both of them took that child and mounted on the car. The lean Madanālasā then laughingly queried: 'O Lord! Whose child is this? Who has left him in this forest? It seems to me Mahādeva, desirous to give me a son, has given him unto me.'

12-18. Campaka said: 'I will just now go and ask the all-knowing Indra whose child is this, whether he is of a Deva, Dānava or Gandharva. If he orders, I will purify this child found thus in this forest by the *Vedic*

mantrams and then accept him as my own. It is not advisable to do a thing suddenly without knowing all the details.' Thus saying to his wife Madanālasā, Campaka went with a gladdened heart hurriedly to the city of Indra with that child in his arms. Campaka gladly bowed down at the feet of Indra and gave him all the information he knew about the child and stood at one side with folded hands and spoke, 'O Lord of the Devas! I have got this child, beautiful as Cupid, in the sacred place of pilgrimage at the confluence of the Yamuṇā and the Tamasā. O Lord of Śachī! Whose child is this? and why did they forsake him there? If you kindly permit, I will take this child as my own son. This child is very beautiful and liked very much by my wife; it is also the rule laid down in the *śāstras* that one can accept any child as the *kṛtrima* son. Therefore it is my earnest desire that I purify this child by the *Vedic mantrams* and take him legally as my own son.'

19-24. Indra said: 'O highly fortunate one! Bhagavān Vāsudeva, assuming the form of a horse, has produced this child out of the womb of Kāmalā in the form of a mare. He intends to give over the child, capable to destroy enemies to Turvasu the son of Yayāti, and thus will get a great purpose achieved by the child. That King, very religious, will be sent by Hari today and he will come for the child in that beautiful sacred place of pilgrimage. You better go back as early as possible and keep the child there as he was before until that king comes to that spot at the instance of the Devadeva Viṣṇu. Do not waste a minute more. The King will be very sorry if he does not find the child there. Therefore O Campaka! Quit the attachment that you have for this child. You should know that this child will be famous in this earth as Ekavīra (only one hero).'

25-30. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus hearing the Indra's words, Campaka took the child and went back immediately to the spot whence he picked him up. Keeping the child there as he laid, mounted on his car and went to his abode. At that instant, the husband of Lakṣmī, the Lord of the three worlds, beaming with effulgent rays, mounted His car and went to King Turvasu. When Bhagavān was descending from His aerial car, King Turvasu was

very glad to see Him, bowed down and laid himself prostrate on the ground. Bhagavān, then, comforted the King, His own devotee, and said, 'Get up, my child! Do away with your mental distress.' The King also eagerly and full of devotion, began to utter verses in praise of Bhagavān: 'O Lord of Ramā! You are the presiding Deity of the Devas; Lord of the whole worlds, Ocean of Mercy and Giver of advice to all men. O Lord! Your *darśan* is very rare even to the *yogīs;* being myself of very slow dull intellect, I have been fortunate enough to see you. O Lord! This shows Your mercy.

31-54. The King continued: 'O Bhagavān! O Infinite One! Those who are free from any desires and free from any attachment to worldly things, alone are entitled to see Thee. O Deva of the Devas! I am bound in thousand one desires. I am quite unfit to see Thee. There is no doubt about this.'

When Turvasu, the best of the kings, praised thus, Bhagavān Viṣṇu became pleased and began to speak in the following pleasant words: 'O King! I am pleased with your asceticism; now ask your desired boon; I will grant it immediately.' The King bowed down again to the feet of Viṣṇu and said: 'O Murāri! For the sake of a son, I have practiced this *tapasyā;* grant me a son like thy Self.' Nārāyaṇa, the First-born of the Devas, hearing the King's request spoke to him in infallible words: 'O son of Yayāti! Go to the confluence of the Yamuṇā and Tamasā. For you I have kept there today a son as you desire, of indomitable prowess. O King! That child is begotten by Me in the womb of Lakṣmī.'

The King became very glad to hear the sweet pure words of Bhagavān. Thus granting him the boon, Viṣṇu went with Ramā to Vaikuṇṭha. King Turvasu, the son of Yayāti, hearing these words, became exceedingly gladdened in his heart and mounting on a chariot whose speed cannot be checked, went to the spot where lay the child. The king, of extraordinary genius, went there and saw that the exceedingly beautiful child, catching hold of his toe by one of his soft hands was sucking it by his mouth and was playing on the ground. The child was born of Nārāyaṇa out of the womb of Kāmalā. Therefore he resembled Him. On looking at that beautiful lovely child, the famous King Harivarmā's face got cheered up

with the most intense delight. The King took him up with both hands and got merged in the Ocean of Bliss, and gladly taking the scent of his head, embraced him happily.

On looking at the beautiful lotus-like face of the child, the King, choked with tears from his eyes and with feelings of joy said: 'O Child! Nārāyaṇa has given me a jewel of a child in you; so save me from the terrors of the hell named Put. O Child! For full one hundred years I have practiced a very hard *tapasyā* for the sake of you. Pleased with that, the Lord of Kāmalā has given you to me for the happiness of my worldly career. Your Mother Ramā Devī has forsaken Her own child for the sake of me, and has gone away with Hari. O child! That Mother is blessed whose face beams with joy by seeing the smiles in your lotus face. O delighter of my heart! The Lord of Ramā, the Deva of the Devas, has made you, as it were, to serve as a boat for me to cross to the other side of this Ocean of World.'

Thus saying, the King took the child and gladly went home. Knowing that the King had come very close to his city, the King's Minister and the city people, the subjects came forward with the priest and many other presents and offerings. The bards, singers and Sūtas came in front of the King. The King as he entered into his city looked affectionately on his subjects and gladdened their spirits by enquiries of welfare. Then worshipped by the citizens, the King entered into the city with his child. As the King went along the royal road, the subjects showered on his head the flowers and fried rice. Then taking the child by his two arms, the King entered into his prosperous palace with his ministers.

The king next handed over the newly-born lovely child, as beautiful as Cupid, to the hands of his queen. The good queen took the child and asked the king: 'O King! Whence have you got this newborn child as fascinating as the God of Love? Who has given this child to you? O Lord! Speak quickly. This child has stolen away my mind.'

The King gladly replied: 'O Beloved! The Lord of Kāmalā, the Ocean of Mercy has given me this child; O quick-eyed one! This child is born of

Nārāyaṇa's part out of the womb of Kāmalā. O Devī! This child has strength, energy, patience, gravity and all other good qualities.' Then the queen took the child in her arms and got unbounded bliss. Great festivities began to be performed in the palace of the King Turvasu. Charity was given to those that wanted; music and singing of various sorts were performed. In this ceremony for the sake of his child, the king Turvasu put the name of the child as Ekavīra. Getting thus the child equivalent in form and qualities to Hari, the powerful Indra-like king became happy and freed from the debt due to his family line, became very cheerful and glad. O King! The king, powerful like his enemies, began to enjoy in his own palace with his all-qualified child that was given to him by Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of all the Devas. He was always served by his dear wife and all sorts of pleasures and he felt himself enjoying as a King would do.

Here ends the Twentieth Chapter in the Sixth Skandha on the son born of mare by Hari, in the MahāPurāṇam in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXI—the Installation of Ekavīra

1-10. Vyāsa said: "O King! In the meanwhile King Turvasu performed the *jātakarma,* a religious ceremony performed at the birth of a child, and other ceremonies for the child. The boy was nurtured duly and began to grow older day-by-day. The King began to enjoy his worldly life on getting this son, and thought within himself that the boy had freed him from the three debts due to the Fathers, the Ṛṣis and the Devas. Next, in the sixth month, the King performed the *annaprāsana* ceremony, putting boiled rice in the mouth of the child, and in the third year performed regularly his *chūda-karana* (the ceremony of the first tonsure) ceremony. He distributed on those occasions various articles, wealth and cows to the Brāhmaṇas, and other gifts to various other mendicants and made them glad. In the eleventh year, he performed the boy's *upanayana* holy thread ceremony, and tying the girdle made of a triple string of *muñja* grass, put the boy to learn archery. Next when the boy passed off proficiently in the study of the *Vedas* and in

learning the kingly duties, the King desired to install him on the throne. King Turvasu then collected with great care all the necessary articles for installation. On an auspicious day, the combination of Puṣyā *nakṣatra* and Arka Yoga, he called the Brāhmaṇas, well versed in the *Vedas* and the *śāstras*, and became ready in accordance with due rites, to perform the installation ceremony of the prince. Waters were brought from various sacred places of pilgrimage and from the several oceans, and on an auspicious day the King himself performed the installation of his son. When the ceremony was over the King gave away hoards of wealth to the Brāhmaṇas and giving the charge of his kingdom to his son, he went to the forest with a desire to ascend to the Heavens.

11-22. Thus placing Ekavīra on the throne, King Turvasu showed respects to his ministers, and controlling his senses went to the forest accompanied by his wife. On the top of the Maināka mountain he took up the vow of *vānaprastha,* and sustaining his life on leaves and fruits began to meditate on Pārvatī. Thus when his *prārabdha-karma* ended, he left his mortal coil with his wife and went by virtue of his good deeds to the Indraloka. Hearing that the King had ascended to Heavens, his son Ekavīra Haihaya performed his funeral ceremonies according to the rules laid down by the *Vedas*. The King's son, the intelligent Haihaya, performed one after another, all the ceremonies due and began to govern the kingdom which was free from enemies. The virtuous King Ekavīra remained duly obedient to his ministers after he got possession of his kingdom, and began to enjoy all the best things. The powerful King one day went on horseback to the banks of the Ganges with the minister's son. Roaming about, he found there the boughs of trees had assumed a very graceful appearance, with loads of fruits, echoed with the sweet voices of the cuckoos and with humming bees. Close by were the hermitages of the Munis, where the bucks were skipping about, and at other places the *Vedas* were being chanted. The smoke was seen rising from the altars where oblations were being offered, and appeared to form like a black canopy in the Heavens. Full ripe grains enhanced the beauty of the fields and the cowherdesses were merrily watching the fields. Places of recreation adorned with full-blown lotuses

and beautiful groves attracted the attention of the visitors. The various trees—Piyāla, Campaka, Panasa, Bakula, Tilaka, Kadamba, Mandāra and others—were adorned with fruits, stealing away the minds of the people. At other places, other trees like Sal, Tamāla, Jack, Mango, Kali Kadamba etc., stood gracefully. Next when the King went to the Ganges water, he saw the gay beautiful full-blown lotuses were spreading their fragrant scent all around.

23-31. On the right side of these lotuses, he saw a lotus-eyed girl. She was shining like gold, her beautiful hair was long and curly; her throat was like a Kambu, belly thin, lips like the Bimba fruits, several other limbs well-built and graceful, breasts risen a little, nose beautiful and all her body was exquisitely lovely; that lady just blooming into youth was suffering bereavements from her comrades and was very distressed and seemed bewildered. She was crying like a ewe in a dense lonely forest. Seeing her, the King asked her, "What is the reason for your sorrows? O cuckoo-voiced one! You are as yet a girl; who has left you alone in this state? O sweet one! Tell me where is your husband now, or where is your father? O one looking askance! What is your trouble; explain it to me. O thin-bellied one! I will, no doubt, remove all your sorrows and troubles. O fair-limbed one! In my dominion nobody ever gives trouble to any other. O lovely one! There is no fear in my kingdom from thieves or Rākṣasas; or any fear from any serious dangerous calamities on this earth, fear from lions, tigers or any other dangers while my sway is predominant.

32-41. O one of beautiful thighs! Why are you crying on this lonely bank of the Ganges? Tell me what is your pain? O pure one! I can remove the pains and miseries of men, even of a serious nature, whether they come from the Devas or human sources; and this is my principal vow. O large-eyed one! Speak what is your inmost desire; I will carry it out instantaneously.'

When the king thus spoke, that beautiful woman spoke in gentle words: 'O King! Hear the cause of my sorrows. O King! Why will the people cry, to no purpose, unless calamities come before them? O mighty-armed one! I now tell you why I am weeping. O King! There was a very religious King named

Rabhya in another province that is not yours. At first he had no issue. He had a very beautiful wife named Rukmarekhā. She was clever, chaste and endowed with all auspicious qualities. But issueless as she was, she remained very sorry and, in a remorseful tone, she spoke to her husband Rabhya: ‘O Lord! I am barren; I have no sons; I am therefore a very unhappy creature. My life is in vain; what use is there in my living?’ When the queen thus spoke very distressedly, the king called the Brāhmaṇas, versed in the *Vedas*, and began to perform an excellent sacrificial ceremony, in due accordance with the Vedic rules. With a desire to get a son, he made many presents in profuse quantities. When copious quantities of ghee were offered as oblations, there arose from the fire, a girl beautiful in all respects and endowed with all auspicious signs.

42-53. Her teeth were very nice, eyebrows very lovely, face enchanting like a full Moon, the luster of the body lovely and of a golden color; her hairs were fine and curling; her lips like the Bimba flowers; her hands and face were of a red color; her eyes were red like lotus and her limbs were soft and gentle. When the girl arose from the fire, the priest (*hotā*) took that lean and thin lady of a nice waist by her arms and presented her to the King and said: ‘O King! Accept this daughter, endowed with all auspicious signs. When Homa was being performed, the daughter came up like the garland Ekāvalī; therefore this girl became famous in this world by the name Ekāvalī. O Ruler of the earth! Take this girl, resembling a son and be happy. O King! Viṣṇu, the Deva of the Devas, has given you this Jewel, this daughter; so be contented.’

Hearing thus the words of the priest, the King saw this good-looking girl and with gladdened heart took the beautiful daughter from his hands. Thus with that lovely daughter he went to his wife Rukmarekhā and said: ‘O beautiful one! Take this daughter.’ The queen Rukmarekhā felt the pleasure of having a son when she got in her arms that lotus eyed beautiful daughter. The King next performed the natal and other ceremonies of the daughter and did all other acts as if she had been a son to him duly in accordance with the rules. The King performed his own sacrificial

ceremonies, gave away lots of *dakśiṇā* to the Brāhmaṇas, dismissed them and became very glad. That beautiful girl was nursed and cared after like a son and she grew older day-by-day. The Queen Rukmarekhā was very gladdened to get her. On that very day the birthday festival was performed as on the occasion of the birth of a son. And that daughter grew older, very affectionate and dear to all.

54-61. O lovely one! You are a king and intelligent too; I will describe to you all the details. Hear. I am the daughter of the minister to that King. My name is Yaśovatī. That daughter and I look alike and of the same age. Therefore the king has made me her comrade. I spend my time day and night always with her as her constant dear companion. Ekāvalī likes very much to remain and sport wherever she finds sweet-scented lotuses; at other places she does not find happiness. At the distant banks of the Ganges many lotuses grow; therefore Ekāvalī goes there with great pleasure to that place with me and her other fellow mates. One day I told the King that Ekāvalī used to go daily to a distant solitary forest to see the lotus-lake. Then the King addressed her not to go, and he got a lake built within the compounds of his palace and planted many lotus seeds therein. Gradually the lotuses began to blossāūṁ and the bees came there to drink honey. Still she used to go outside in search of lotuses. Then the King sent armed guards to accompany her. Thus that thin-bodied daughter of the King used to go daily to the banks of the Ganges for play, guarded by armed soldiers, accompanied by myself and other companions. Again when the sporting was over, she used to return to the palace.'

Here ends the Twenty-First Chapter on the Sixth Skandha on the installation of Ekavīra and the birth of Ekāvalī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXII—the Stealing of Ekāvalī

1-10. Yaśovatī spoke: "O King! One day Ekāvalī got up early in the morning and went to the banks of the Ganges, accompanied by her companions;

they began to fan her with a chowrie. The armed guards accompanied her. Slowly she went where there were the lotuses in order to sport with them. I, too, went with her playing with the lotuses to the banks of the Ganges and both of us began to play with lotuses with the Apsarās. When both of us were deeply engaged in the play, then one powerful Dānava, named Kālaketu, came up there suddenly with many Rākṣasas armed with *parighas*, swords, clubs, bows, arrows, *tomaras* and many other weapons. Ekāvalī was playing with the best lotuses when Kālaketu saw her in that state, blooming with beauty and youth as if like Ratī, the Goddess of Love. O King! I then spoke to Ekāvalī: 'Look! Who is this Daitya that has come here unexpectedly; O Lotus-eyed One! Let us go into the central part of our armed guards.' O King! My companion and myself consulting thus, went out of fear immediately into the center of the armed guards. Kālaketu was seized with the arrows of Cupid, and no sooner he looked at that beautiful young lady than he, with a very big club in his hand, hurriedly came to us, drove away the guards, and took away my lotus-eyed companion, of thin waist. Then the young lady, helpless, began to tremble and cried aloud.

11-22. Seeing this, I spoke to the Dānava: 'Leave her and take me.' The passionate Dānava did not take me but he went away, taking my companion. The guards exclaimed: 'Wait, wait; don't fly away with the girl; we are giving you a good lesson.' Thus saying, they made the powerful Dānavas stop and both the parties engaged in a very terrible conflict, astounding to all. The followers of the Dānavas, more cruel and all fully armed began at once to fight with great enthusiasm for their Master's cause. Kālaketu himself began to fight afterwards terribly and killed the guards. He, then, with his followers, carried away my companion towards his own city. I, too, followed my companion, when I saw her thus carried away by the Dānava and crying out of fear. I also walked crying aloud by those tracks as would enable my Sakhī to see me. She, too, seeing me, became somewhat consoled. Crying out repeatedly I approached her. She was already very distressed and when she saw me, she clasped me closely around my neck, perspiring and stunned and, becoming more distressed, cried aloud. Kālaketu then showed his liking for me and told that my

quick-eyed companion was very afraid and that I might comfort her. He told me thus: 'O Dear! My city is like the Deva's abodes; you will soon be able to go there. From today I become your slave, bound by love. Do not cry thus distressedly; be comforted.' In these words he told me to comfort my dear companion. Thus speaking, that villain made both of us mount on the beautiful chariot and making us sit by his sides went gladly and quickly to his own beautiful palace, followed by his army.

23-30. That Demon placed both of us in a beautiful house, white-washed and mirror-like, and kept hundreds and thousands of Rākṣasas to watch and protect us. On the second day he called me in private: 'Your companion is very much distressed on the bereavement from her father and mother and is lamenting; make her understand console her.' He told me to speak the following words to my companion: 'O one of beautiful hips! Be my wife and enjoy as you like. O one with a face beautiful like the Moon! This kingdom is yours; ever I am your obedient slave.' Hearing his unbearable harsh words I said: 'O Lord! I will not be able to speak her these words, disagreeable to her. You better speak this yourself.' When I spoke thus, that wicked Dānava struck by the arrows of Cupid began to speak gently to my dear companion of thin belly, thus: 'O dear one! Today you have successfully cast on me the *vasīkarana-mantra* (one of the Tāntrik processes by which a lover is made to come under subjection); O beloved! Therefore my heart is stolen and so much brought under your subjection; this has converted me into a veritable slave of yours; then know this as certain that I am your slave; O sweet one! I am very much troubled by Cupid's arrows and I am semi-unconscious; therefore O lean-bellied one! Worship me. O one of beautiful thighs! This youth is a very rare and transient thing; O auspicious one! Now embrace me as your husband make your youth a veritable success.'

31-36. Ekāvalī said: 'O fortunate one! My father wanted to hand me over to a prince named Haihaya; I also mentally adopted him as my husband. You are certainly aware of the *śāstras;* how can I now abandon the eternal religion and the virtue of a woman and take up another husband? The girl

must accept him to whom the father betrothes. The girl is under every circumstances dependent. Never do they get any independence.' Though Ekāvalī said thus, the vicious Daitya, struck by Cupid's arrows, did not desist and did not leave me and my larged-eyed companion. His city lies in Pātāla and is a very dangerous place; always it is guarded by Rākṣasas and surrounded by a moat; inside is built a beautiful and strong fort. Now my dear companion, the queen of my heart, is staying there with a grievous heart and I am here wandering hither and thither very much troubled on account of her bereavements.'

37-46. Ekavīra said: 'O beautiful-faced one! How have you been able to get away from the city of that wicked demon and how have you been able to come here? I am perfectly at my wit's end. Say quickly all these. O proud one! I doubt your words; the father of your dear companion resolved to give his daughter to Haihaya in marriage; now I am that Haihaya. I am the King by that name, on this earth; there is no other King by the name of Haihaya. Is it that your dear companion is meant for me? O *bhāminī* (passionate woman)! Remove my doubts; I will kill that villain Rākṣasa and bring just now your dear companion; there is no doubt about this. O one of good vows! Show me that place, if it be known to you.

Has anybody informed her father that she is suffering from so many troubles? Has her father come to know that her daughter has been stolen and carried away? And has he made any effort to rescue her from the hands of that villain Rākṣasa? Is it that the King is calm and quiet, knowing that his daughter has been kept in prison? Or is it that he is unable to free her from bondage? Say quickly all these things before me. O lotus-eyed one! You have captivated my mind by describing the extraordinary qualities of your dear companion and have made me passionate too. Alas! When will it be that I will free my beautiful beloved from the greatest perilous situation and shall see her face and her eyes, beaming with joy? O sweet-speaking one! Say, by what means I can go to that impassable city. How have you been able to come from there?'

47-63. Yaśovatī said: 'O King! In my early age I got the *mantram* of the Devī Bhagavatī with its *bīja-mantram* (mystic syllable involving in it the power connoted by the Devī) and how to meditate it. While I was in the Dānava's place I thought out that at that juncture I would worship the powerful Caṇḍikā who gives one's own desires instantaneously. I thought, "If I worship that Śakti Who fructifies all desires, Who is all mercy to Her Bhaktas, certainly She will free my dear companion from this her bondage. Though She is really without form, yet She, without anybody's help, by Her own force, is creating, preserving, and at the end of the *kalpa*, destroying this Universe. Oh! She is very wonderful indeed!"

Thus thinking I began to meditate that auspicious red-robed and red-eyed Devī, the Lady of the Universe, and recollected mentally Her form and repeated silently Her *bīja-mantram*. When I meditated thus for merely one month, Caṇḍikā Devī became, through my devotion, maṇifest to me in my dreams and began to speak in sweet nectar-like words: 'You are now asleep; go quickly to the beautiful banks of the Ganges. The enemy-destroyer, the powerful Ekavīra, the greatest of all the kings, will come there. Dattātreya, the Great Lord of the Munis, has given him My *mantra* named *mahāvidyā;* the King also constantly worships Me devotedly with that. His mind is constantly attached to Me and he constantly worships Me. What more to say than this fact that the king, extremely devoted to Me, meditates on Me as the internal controller of all beings. That intelligent son of Lakṣmī will come for sport to the banks of the Ganges and will remove all your sorrows. That king Ekavīra, versed in all the *śāstras* will kill the Rākṣasas in a dreadful battle and will rescue Ekāvalī. So now you pay heed to My word.' Lastly, She told me that my companion should marry that beautiful King, endowed with all auspicious qualifications. Thus saying, She disappeared and I instantly woke up.

Then I informed my lotus-eyed dear Sakhī all the details of my dream as well my worshipping the Devī; hearing this, her lotus face beamed with joy and gladness. That sweet-smiling Ekāvalī very gladly told me, 'O dear companion! Go at once for our success. That truth-speaking Bhagavatī

Ambikā Devī will release us from our bondage.’ O King! When my dear companion ordered me thus, I thought it proper, as also dictated to me in my dream, to go out and soon I did it. O King! Due to the grace of the Great Devī, I came to know the way and I also got the quick motion. Thus I have described to you the cause of my sorrow. O Hero! Who are you, whose son are you? Speak truly to me.’

Here ends the Twenty-second Chapter in the Sixth Skandha on the narration to Haihaya the stealing away of Ekāvalī in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIII—the battle of Haihaya and Kālaketu

1. Vyāsa said: “O King! That powerful son of Lakṣmī, Haihaya, became very glad to hear these words of Yaśovatī and said:

2-14. ‘O one of beautiful thighs! Hear in reply to your query: I am Haihaya, the son of Lakṣmī, and I am known in this world by the name of Ekavīra. Now you have made my mind dependent. What am I to do now? where to go? Thus distressed with bereavement from your dear companion, my mind is struck with Cupid’s arrows and is confounded with her extraordinary beauty that you just now described. Next you described her qualifications and my mind is ravished. Again when you described before me what she uttered in the presence of the Rākṣasa, I am struck with great wonder. Your dear companion Ekāvalī said before the vicious Dānava Kālaketu, “I have already selected the King Haihaya. I will not select any other than him, this is my firm resolve.” These words have converted me into her slave. O sweet-haired one! Say now what service can I do to you both? I am not acquainted with that wicked demon’s palace; never I went to his city.

O fair-eyed one! Say how I can go there; for you are the only one who can lead me there. Therefore take me quickly to that place where your beautiful dear companion is staying. Your dear companion, the daughter of the King is very much afflicted with sorrow; soon I will free her by destroying that

cruel Rākṣasa. There is no doubt about this. O auspicious one! I will rescue your dear companion, bring her to your city and hand her over to her father. Then that King, the enemy-destroyer, will perform the marriage ceremony of his daugther. I think this is the desire of your heart. O sweet-speaking one! Know that that is also my desire. O beautiful one! Now that desire will be fulfilled by your efforts. Show me quickly that place, and see my prowess. O one with a face beautiful like the Moon! It seems that you will be able to do my work. Soon do such as I can kill that wicked demon, who steals others' wives. Now show me the way to the impassable city of that Rākṣasa.'

15-26. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing the sweet words of the prince, Yaśovatī became very glad and gently began to tell him how he could go to the demon's city: 'O King! Take the success-giving *mantra* of Bhagavatī, and I would then be able to show you today the city guarded by the Rākṣasas. O King! Better arrange to take your vast army with you; for you will have to fight as soon as you go there. Kālaketu is personally a great warrior surrounded by Rākṣasas of great power and strength. Therefore be initiated in the *mantram* of Śrī Bhagavatī and accompany me. So you will surely be successful, I will show you the way to the city of that Demon. Slay that vicious and vilest of the Rākṣasas and rescue my dear companion.'

Hearing thus, Haihaya was duly initiated into the great *mantram* of Yogeśvarī, named Trilokitilaka-*mantra:* ***hṛīṁ gaurī rudradayite yogeśvarī hūṁ phaṭ svāhā***, that is conducive to the welfare of the beings, by Mahārṣi Dattātreya, the chief of the *jñāṇīs*, accidentally come there as if ordained by Fate. Thus by the influence of the *mantram* the King got the power of knowing all things and going everywhere with unobstructed speed. Then the King Haihaya quickly went with Yaśovatī to the impassable city of the Rākṣasas, accompanied by a vast army. The city was surrounded by snakes and guarded by the terrible Rākṣasas like the city of Pātāla. The messengers of the Rākṣasa, seeing the King coming, were struck with terror; crying aloud quickly went to Kālaketu. Kālaketu, struck with Cupid's arrows, was sitting beside Ekāvalī and was speaking many modest words when the

messenger went there suddenly and said: 'O King! The attendant of this lady Yaśovatī is coming here with a prince and an army.

27-29. O King! We cannot tell exactly whether the prince is the son of Indra, named Jayanta or Kārtikeya. After all, puffed up with the strength of his army, he is coming here. O King! The battle is imminent; now make your arrangements fully and carefully; fight with the son of a Deva or abandon this lotus-eyed Lady. O King! At a distance of three Yojanas from this place, be is staying with his army. Now equip yourself and quickly declare the war by blowing the war trumpets.'

30-36. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing the messenger's words, Kālaketu the King of the Demons, became overwhelmed with anger and at once sent many powerful Rākṣasas, holding all sorts of weapons and spoke out to them: 'O Rākṣasas! With weapons in your hands, go before them quickly.' Ordering them thus, Kālaketu asked in sweet words Ekāvalī who was in front and very distressed. 'O thin-bellied one! Who is coming here? Is he your father or any other man coming with his army to release you? Speak this to me truly. If your father comes here to take you back, being very much distressed with your bereavement, I will never fight with him, if I come to know this truly; rather I will bring him to my house and worship him with the excellent horses, gems and jewels and clothings. Really I will show my full hospitality duly to him when he comes here. And if any other person comes, then I will take his life by the sharpened arrows; there is no doubt about this. Know this as certain whoever comes here for your rescue is brought by the hand of Death to me. Therefore, O large-eyed one! Say who is this fool that is coming, not knowing me as the powerful and unconquerable *kāla* (Death).

37-38. Ekāvalī said: 'O highly fortunate one! I do not know who is this coming to this side with a violent speed. O King! How can I know that, when I am in this state of confinement in your house? This man is not my father nor my brother. Some other powerful man is coming here. I do not know exactly what for he is coming.'

39-40. The Demon said: 'My messengers say that your comrade Yaśovatī has taken with her that warrior and is coming to this side with great energy. Where has your clever companion gone now? O lotus-eyed! There is no enemy in the three worlds strong enough to fight against me.'

41-66. Vyāsa said: "O King! Just then other messengers hurriedly came there terrified and spoke to Kālaketu who had been staying in the house, thus: 'O King! The army has come quite close to the city. How are you staying in the house, calm and quiet? Better march out of the city with your vast army as early as possible.'

The powerful Kālaketu, hearing their words, mounted on his chariot and quickly went out of his city. The King Haihaya, on the other hand, suffering from the bereavements of his dear lady, suddenly came there mounted on horseback. The terrible fight ensued then and there between the two. Each one struck the other with sharpened weapons, and the quarters all around blazed with their glitterings and clashings. While the terrible fight was going on, Haihaya the son of Lakṣmī, struck Kālaketu the King of the Daityas with a very powerful club (*gadā*). Thus struck by the *gadā*, the Lord of the Daityas fell on the ground like a mountain struck by lightning, and died. All the Rākṣasas fled away on all sides, struck with terror.

Yaśovatī went then very hurriedly with a gladdened heart to Ekāvalī and began to speak to her in terms of surprise and in sweet words: 'O dear! O dear! Come, come; the great warrior, the prince Ekavīra has killed the Lord of the Daityas in a dreadful battle. That King is now waiting, tired in the midst of his soldiers. He has already heard from me about your beauty and qualities; and now he is expecting to see you. O one looking askance! Now satisfy your eyes and mind by seeing that King who is like Cupid. When I described to him your beauty and qualifications before on the banks of the Ganges, he got enamored of you and now he is suffering from bereavement and wants to see you.

Thus hearing, Ekāvalī determined to go to him but as she was yet unmarried, she became abashed and afraid. She thought how she could see

the prince as she was unmarried. It might be that he, being passionate would catch her by her arms. Thus troubled with thought, that daughter of the King Ekāvalī, with a sad look and wearing poor clothes, went with Yaśovatī on a palanquin carried on men's shoulders.

Seeing that large-eyed daughter of the King coming there, the prince said: 'O Beautiful One! My two eyes are very thirsty to see you. Satisfy my eyes and mind by showing yourself to me.'

Seeing the prince passionate and the King's daughter very much abashed, Yaśovatī, who knew the rules of modesty, thus spoke to the prince: 'O Prince! The father of my dear companion expressed a desire to betroth her to your hands. She is also obedient to you. Therefore your meeting will certainly take place. O King! wait; take her to her father; and he will perform duly the marriage ceremony and betroth her to your hands. Know this to be quite certain.'

The King took her words to be quite just and true, and taking those two ladies went with his army to the house of the father of Ekāvalī. Ekāvalī's father became very glad and cheerful to learn that his daughter was coming and accompanied by his ministers, went hurriedly to her. After a long time the King saw his daughter in poor clothing and became highly pleased. Yaśovatī then described in detail all what happened before the King. The King then with his minister brought with great love, courtesy and gentleness Ekavīra to his house and on an auspicious day performed the marriage ceremony of him with Ekāvalī, in accordance with due ceremonies and rites. Then the King gave away many cloths, ornaments, jewels, articles for fitting a house and many other things, worshipped duly and sent his daughter together with Yaśovatī away with the King Haihaya.

Thus the marriage ceremony was performed, the son of Lakṣmī gladly returned to his house and began to enjoy many pleasures with his wife. Then in course of time, in the womb of Ekāvalī the King Haihaya got a son named Kṛtavīrya. The son of this Kṛtavīrya is known as Kārtavīrya. O King! Thus I have narrated to you the origin of the Haihaya dynasty."

Here ends the Twenty-third Chapter in the Sixth Skandha on the battle of Haihaya and Kālaketu in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIV—Description of Viksepa Śakti

1-5. The King Janamejaya said: "O Bhagavān! I am not satiated with drinking the divine sweet nectar-like words coming out of your lotus mouth. You have described to me in detail the wonderful and variegated story of the origin of the Haihaya dynasty; but, O Muni! There has arisen in my mind a curiosity to know something more on this subject. See, Bhagavān Viṣṇu is the Lord of Lakṣmī, the Deva of the Devas, the Ruler of this whole Universe and the Cause of the Creation, Preservation and Destruction; yet that Best of Puruṣas Śrī Bhagavān had to assume a horse form. If He is undecaying and independent, how then He came to be dependent? Clear this doubt of mine. O Best of Munis! You are omniscient; therefore satisfy my curiosity by describing this wonderful event."

6-16. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hear what I heard of yore from Nārada how this doubt was removed. The mind-born son of Brahmā, Mahārṣi Nārada got powers to go everywhere by virtue of his *tapas*, could know everything, was of a calm and quiet nature, dear to all and he was a poet. On one occasion he went out on tour round the world, playing with his *vīnā* with *svara* and *tāla*. One day he came to my *āśrama*, singing many things concerning *Bṛhat Rathantara Sāma Veda* and the sweet nectar-like Gāyatrī, the Giver of Liberation.

O King! There was a very sacred place of hermitage, beaming as it were with happiness and self-knowledge named Śamyāprāsa on the banks of the river Sarasvatī. There was situated my hermitage. Seeing the lustrous Nārada the son of the Grandsire Brahmā coming, I got up and offered him duly *pādya* water to wash his feet and *arghya,* offerings of worship, etc., and worshipped him. When that Muni of indomitable luster took his seat on the *āsana*, I sat beside him. When I found Nārada, the Giver of Knowledge,

at rest and quiet, I duly asked him the very same question that you have asked me just now: ‘O Best of Munis! What happiness is there on the beings taking their birth in this world? I never found it in any place or in any concern, this I can say positively. Still why do the high-minded persons do *karma*, fascinated by the enchantments of the world? Look! I was born in an island. Just after my birth, my mother forsook me. Helpless, I grew in the forest as my *karma* allowed. Next I performed a very severe *tapasyā* before Mahādeva, the Deva of the Devas, on the mountain with a desire to have a son.

17-38. As a fruit of that I got Śuka as my son, the foremost of the Gnostics, and taught him completely the essence of the *Vedas* from the beginning to the end. O Devarsī! When my son got wisdom from you, he left this world, even when I became very distressed on his bereavement and wept aloud, and he went away to the next world. Very much afflicted for the parting of my son, I abandoned the great Mount Meru. I got very lean due to the absence of my dear son whom I loved very much; and becoming very distressed and knowing this whole world to be an illusion, I remembered my mother and went to the Kuru Jāṅgala district, as if bound up and controlled by the snares of Māyā.

When I heard that King Śāntanu had married my mother, I built my hermitage on the holy banks of the Sarasvatī and remained there. When King Śāntanu went to the next world, my chaste mother remained with two sons. At that time Bhīṣma looked after their sustenance and maintained them. The intelligent Gaṅgā’s son Bhīṣma Deva installed Citrāngada on the throne. A short while after this, Citrāngada, too, looking like a second Cupid and extremely lovely, went to the jaws of death. The mother Satyavatī was drowned in the sorrows for her son Citrāngada and began to weep for him.

O King! Knowing my mother in that sorrowful condition, I went to her. Bhīṣma and I then consoled her with hopeful words. Bhīṣma Deva was averse to marrying and then becoming a King; therefore he installed again the younger brother, the powerful Vicitravīrya on the throne. O King!

Bhīṣma defeated by his own prowess the kings, brought the two daughters of King Kāśīrāj and handed them over to Satyavatī, so that she might give them over to Vicitravīrya. Then, on an auspicious day, and in an auspicious *lagnā* when the marriage ceremony of my brother Vicitravīrya was performed, I became glad. My brother, a good archer, was shortly afterwards attacked with consumption, and thus he died without any issue. At this my mother became very sad and dejected. Seeing their husband dead, the two daughters of Kāśīrāja became ready to preserve their religion of chastity and said to their mother-in-law, sorrowful and weeping: 'We two shall accompany our husbands and become Satī (i.e., be burnt up with our husbands). O Devī! We will go to the Heavens with your son. We, the two sisters united, will enjoy with him in the Nandana Garden.'

The mother was very much attached to them and with the permission of Bhīṣma Deva, very affectionately made them desist from this great attempt. When all the funeral obsequies of Vicitravīrya were over, my mother consulted with Bhīṣma and remembered me in Hastinānagara. As soon as she remembered me, immediately I knew her mental feelings, hurriedly came to Hastinānagara and, with my head bowed, fell prostrate before her feet. With folded hands addressed my mother who was very much inflamed with the fire of sorrow for the death of her son, thus: 'O Mother! Why have you called me here mentally? I see you are very much dejected; I am your servant; order me what I can do for you. O Mother! You are my greatest place of pilgrimage and you are my highest deity; I am very anxious since I have come here; say what you desire.'

39-44. Vyāsa said: "O Best of Munis! When I said thus and waited before her, then she looked at Bhīṣma standing close by and said: 'O child! Your brother died of consumption; therefore I am very sorrowful, lest the family becomes extinct. O intelligent one! For the continuance of the line, then, with the permission of Gaṅgā's son, I have called you here today by *samādhi-yoga*. O son of Parāśara! You re-establish the name of Śāntanu that is going now to be well-nigh extinct. O Vyāsadeva! Relieve me soon from

this sorrow of mine, lest this line be extinct. There are the two daughters of Kāśīrāja, honest and good and endowed with youth and beauty. O highly intelligent One! Better you cohabit with them and save the family of Bhārata by begetting sons. You will not be touched with any sin.'

45-55. Vyāsa said: "O Devarsī! Hearing the mother's words, I became very anxious and humbly told her with great shame: 'O Mother! To touch another's wife is a very sinful act; knowing well the path of *dharma*, how can I willingly and intentionally violate that? So also, the Mahārṣis say that the wife of a younger brother is like a daughter. Studying all the *Vedas*, how can I do this blameworthy and adulterous act? To preserve a line of family by illegal ways is never to be done; for then the fathers of the sinners can never cross this ocean of world. How can one who is the spiritual preceptor of all, and the writer of all the *Purāṇas*, do this act knowingly which is awfully strange and very bad and nasty in its nature?'

My mother was very much plunged into the sea of sorrows for the bereavement of her son; so to preserve the family, she came again to me, weeping and said: 'O son of Parāśara! If you follow my word, you won't incur any sin. O child! If the reasonable words of the *gurus* be even faulty, one should obey them according to the tradition of the *śistas*. Therefore, O child! Keep my word and preserve my honor; no sin will touch you. O child! Think very well. Your mother is very sorry and is immersed in the ocean of afflictions; therefore it is your paramount duty to make her happy by begetting children for the continuance of the family.'

Hearing my mother speaking to me thus, Bhīṣma, the Gaṅgā's son, the expert in finding out truth in fine points with regard to *dharma*, said to me: 'O Dvaipāyana! You are wholly sinless; you ought not therefore to argue on this point; obey your mother as she says and be happy.'

56-61. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing his words and my mother's request, I decided to do this very hateful act with a fearless heart without any suspicion. When Ambikā finished her ablutions after menstruation, I gladly cohabited with her in the night; but that young lady seeing my ugly ascetic

form, was not attached to me; I then cursed that beautiful woman thus: 'As you closed your eyes at the first cohabitation with me, your son will be born blind.'

O Muni! On the second day my mother enquired me when I was alone: 'O Dvaipāyana! Will there be born a son of the daughter of Kāśīrāj?' I then bowed my head with shame, and told, 'Mother! The son will be born blind, through my curse.' O Muni! The mother then rebuked me harshly, 'O child! Why did you curse that the son of Ambikā would be born blind?'

Here ends the Twenty-fourth Chapter in the Sixth Skandha on the description of Viksepa Śakti in the discourse between Vyāsa and Nārada in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXV—the Cause of Moha of Vyāsadeva

1-10. Vyāsa said: "O King! The mother became astonished to hear me. Becoming very anxious for a son, she began to speak to me. 'O child! The wife of your brother, the daughter Ambālikā of Kāśīrāj, is a widow; she is very sorrowful; she is endowed with all auspicious signs and endowed with all good qualities; better cohabit with that beautiful young wife and get a child according to the tradition of the *śistas*. Persons born blind are not entitled to kingdoms. Therefore take my word, procreate a beautiful son and thus keep my honor.'

O Muni! Hearing the mother's words, I began to wait in Hastināpura until Ambālikā, the daughter of Kāśīrāj, finished her ablutions after menstruation. That King's daughter, of curling hairs, came to me alone at her mother-in-law's order, and became very much abashed. Seeing me an ascetic with matted hairs on my head and void of every love sentiment, perspiration came on her face; her body turned pale and her mind void of any love towards me. When I saw that lady trembling and pale beside me, I angrily spoke: 'O one of beautiful waist! When you have turned out pale, considering your own beauty, let your son be of a pale color.' Thus saying I

spent there that night with Ambālikā. After enjoying her I took farewell from my mother and went to my place.

11-21. In due course, the two daughters of the King gave birth to two sons respectively, one blind and the other pale. The son of Ambikā was named Dhṛtarāṣṭra; and the son of Ambālikā was named Pāṇḍu, as his color was *paṇḍu* (pale). Mother became absent-minded when she saw the two sons in those states. After one year she again called me and said: 'O Dvaipāyana! These two persons are not so fit to become kings; therefore beget one more son beautiful and according to my liking.' When I consented, she became very glad and, in due course, asked Ambikā to embrace me and give birth to a son endowed with extraordinary qualities, and fit to preserve the line worthy of the Kuru dynasty. The bride did not then say anything on account of her bashfulness. But when I went in the night time according to my mother's order, to the sleeping room, Ambikā sent to me a maid-servant of Vicitravīrya, full of youth and beauty, and adorned with various ornaments and clothings. That maid-servant of beautiful hairs and of a swan-like gait adorned with garlands and red sandalwood paste, came to me with many enchanting gestures and making me take my seat on the cot, became herself merged in love sentiments. O Muni! I became pleased with her gestures and amorous sports and passed the night full of love towards her, and played and cohabited with her. At last I gladly gave her the boon, 'O fortunate one! Your child, begotten by me, will be endowed with all good qualities, will be of good form, will be conversant with all the essences of *dharma*, calm, quiet and truthful.'

22-34. In due course, a child named Vidura was born to her. Thus I had three sons; and in my mind grew up *māyā* and affection that 'these are my sons.' When I saw again those three sons, heroic and full of manliness, the only cause of my sorrow due to the bereavement of my son Śuka vanished away from my mind. O Lord of Dvījas! Māyā is very powerful and extremely hard to be abandoned by those who are not masters of their senses; She enchants even the wise, though She does not possess any form,

nor any substratum nor support. I could not find any peace, even in the forest, as my mind was attached to my mother and children.

O Muni! My mind then began to oscillate like a pendulum, and I remained sometime in Hastināpura and sometime on the banks of the Sarasvatī. I could not stay in a certain fixed place. By discrimination, the knowledge sometimes flashed in my mind: 'Whose sons are these? The attachment is nothing but merely a delusion. On my death they would not be entitled to perform my *śrāddha* ceremony. These sons are begotten by ways and manners not sanctioned by *dharma;* what happiness can they bring to me?' O Muni! The powerful Māyā has caused this delusion in me. What? Even knowing this *saṁsāra* to be unreal, Alas! I have fallen into this well of the darkness of delusion. Thus I repented when I thought over the matter deeply and when I was alone in a solitary place.

When, subsequently, through the mediation of Bhīṣma, the powerful Pāṇḍu got the kingdom, I became pleased to see the prosperity of my son. O Muni! This is also the creation of Māyā. The daughter of the King Śūrasena named Kuntī, and the daughter of the King of Madra named Mādrī became the two beautiful wives of Pāṇḍu. Pāṇḍu was cursed by a Brāhmaṇa that he would die if he cohabited with any woman; he therefore became dispassionate and quitting his kingdom, went to the forest with his two wives. Hearing Pāṇḍu gone to the forest I felt pain. I went to my son who was staying with his wives and consoling him, and came to Hastināpura, where I held a conversation with Dhṛtarāṣṭra and then came back to the banks of the river Sarasvatī.

35-50. Pāṇḍu in his forest life, got five sons out of his wives by the Devas Dharma, Vāyu, Indra, and the twin Aśvins. Dharma, Vāyu, and Indra begat respectively of Kuntī the three sons Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīmasena and Arjuna; and the two Aśvins begat of Mādrī the two sons Nakula and Sahadeva. Once Mādrī, full of youth and beauty, was staying alone in a solitary place and Pāṇḍu seeing her embraced her and due to the curse, died. When the funeral pyre was ablaze, the chaste Mādrī entered into the fire and died a Satī. Kuntī was prevented from doing so, as she was to nurse and look after

her young children. The Munis then took the sorrowful Kuntī, the daughter of Śūrasena, bereft of her husband to Hastināpura and handed her over to the high-souled Bhīṣma and Vidura. When I came to hear this, my mind was greatly agitated to see the pain and pleasure that other people suffered. Bhīṣma, Vidura, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra began to nourish and support Yudhiṣṭhira and others as they considered them the sons of their dearest Pāṇḍu. The cruel and wicked sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Duryodhana and others united with each other and began to quarrel horribly with the sons of Pāṇḍu. Droṇāchārya came there accidentally. Bhīṣma treated him with great respect and requested him to stay in Hastināpura and educate the sons of Kuru. Karṇa was the son of Kuntī when she was young and unmarried; and he was quit by her no sooner he was born. The charioteer Sūta Adhiratha found him in a river and nourished him. Karṇa was the foremost of the heroes, and therefore the great favorite of Duryodhana. The enmity between Bhīma and Duryodhana, etc., began to grow greater day-by-day.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra, thinking of the difficult situation of his children, fixed the residence of the sons of Pāṇḍu at the Vāranāvata city so that the quarrels might die away. Out of enmity, Duryodhana ordered his dear friend Purochana to build there a house of lac for the Pāṇḍavas. O Muni! When I heard that Kuntī and her five sons were burnt in the lac-house, I became merged in the ocean of sorrows and thought that 'they were my grandsons.' I was overwhelmed with sorrow and began to search after them in deep forests day and night until at last I found them in Ekachakrā city, lean and thin and very much distressed with sorrow.

51-63. I became very glad to see them and sent them soon to the city of the King Drupada. Wearing the deerskin, they went there dejected with sorrow in Brāhmaṇa's dress and stayed in the royal court. The victorious Arjuna showed prowess and pierced the eye of the fish and obtained Kṛṣṇā, the daughter of the King Drupada. By the order of the mother Kuntī, the five brothers married her. O Muni! I became very glad to see that they were all married. The Pāṇḍavas, then, accompanied by Pānchālī, soon went to

Hastināpura. Dhṛtarāṣṭra then fixed Khāndavaprastha as the residence of the Pāṇḍavas.

Viṣṇu, the son of Vāsudeva, then performed the Yajñā with the victorious Arjuna and satisfied the Great Fire. The Pāṇḍavas next performed the Rājasūya sacrifice and that made me very glad. Seeing the affluence and prosperity of the Pāṇḍavas and the great assembly hall beautiful and exquisitely artistic, Duryodhana was burnt up, as it were, with malice and made arrangements for cheating play in dice, very injurious in its consequences. Śakuni was expert in playing deceitfully and Yudhiṣṭhira the son of Dharma was not expert in this play. So Duryodhana made Śakuni play for him and stole away all that Yudhiṣṭhira had and at last insulted, in the royal assembly, the daughter of Drupada, Yajñāsenī and gave her much trouble. The Pāṇḍavas then went with Pānchālī in an exile in the forest for twelve years. And I was very much grieved to hear this.

O Muni! Though I know all about the *sanātana-dharma*, yet I was deluded and merged in these worlds of pains and pleasures. Who am I? To whom do these sons belong? My mind roams day and night on the thought of all these. O Muni! What shall I do? And whither shall I go? I don't find happiness anywhere; my mind is, as it were, floating in a rocking machine and it is never being fixed. O best of Munis! You are all-knowing; solve my doubts so that my mental fever may be quietened and I may be happy."

Here ends the Twenty-fifth Chapter on the cause of Moha of Vyāsa Deva asked before Nārada in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXVI—Nārada's Moha

1-13. Vyāsa said: "O King! When I asked him why this delusion overtook me, Mahārṣi Nārada smiled and said: 'O son of Parāśara! You are thoroughly acquainted with all the *Purāṇas*. Why then are you making this question about the cause of your *moha* (delusion)? No embodied soul can exist in this *saṁsāra* without *moha*. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra and the other

Devas, Śanaka, Kapila and the other Ṛṣis, all these are surrounded by Māyā and are thus travelling in this path of *saṁsāra*. The people know me as a *jñāṇin;* but I too am deluded like an ordinary man. I am now speaking to you as certain as anything my of previous history now. I was deluded by Māyā; hear it attentively.

O son of Vāsavī! Great troubles and pains were felt by me before due to this *moha*, for my wife. One day Parvata and I, the two Devaṛṣis, went out together from the Devaloka to see the excellent portion of the earth named Bhārata, and came to the Martyaloka or the land of the mortals. We then began to travel over various places and saw the places of pilgrimages and the holy places and the beautiful hermitages of the Munis. Before we went out from the Devaloka, we consulted with each other and entered into this agreement that we would not hide our feelings from each other, whether they be good or bad, while we would travel over the face of the earth. Whether it be our desire to get food, or wealth or women for enjoyment, whatever arises in the mind of either of us, we would express that freely amongst ourselves. Thus making an agreement, we went out in right earnest as Munis to travel over the face of this earth. Thus roaming all over the face of the earth, at the end of the summer season, when the rainy season commenced we came to the beautiful city of the King named Sanjaya. The King showed us great respect and worshipped us with devotion. Since then we remained for four months at his house.

14-33. During the four months of the rainy season, the roads are always almost impassable; it is therefore wise to stay at one place. For eight months, the Dvījas should always remain abroad on some work or other. Thinking all these, we two began to stay in the house of the King Sanjaya. That liberal-minded King gladly and respectfully kept us as his guests and tendered to us all our requirements. The King had a very beautiful daughter named Damayantī, with good teeth. The King ordered her to take care of us. That large-eyed princess of great discrimination was very energetic, day and night. She began to serve both of us. In due time she gave us water for our bath, excellent meat, food, towels for cleaning and

rubbing our faces—in fact, everything that we desired. She kept ready for us whatever we desired: fans, seats, beds, whatever were necessary for us. Thus she began to serve. We were also engaged in the study of our *Vedas* and in those practices that were approved by the *Vedas*.

O Dvaipāyana! I used to sing, then, with *vīnā* in my hands, the sweet lovely *Sāma Gāyatrī* songs in tunes and good *svaras*. The princess herself appreciated the songs and when she heard these *Sāma* songs, ravishing to one's mind, she became attached to me and showed signs of affection. Day-by-day the attachment towards me grew stronger. Seeing her attached to me, my mind also became attached to her. Thus that princess indulged in amorous sentiments towards me and began to make slight distinctions between the food and other things offered to me and Parvata. I got warm water for my bath and Parvata used to get cold water; I got nice curds when food was served to me whereas Parvata got only whey. I got nice white bedding for myself to sleep on whereas Parvata had merely a dirty sheet to lie down. Thus the princess began to serve me with great love and devotion but not so she served Parvata. The fair lady began to look at me with eyes of love; not so towards Parvata. Parvata was very much surprised to see all this and thought within himself, "What is this?"

Parvata, then, asked me in private: 'O Nārada! Speak out to me truly in detail. The princess shows with much gladness and affection her deep love towards you; she serves you with dainty dishes but she behaves not so with me. I therefore suspect when I see all these distinctions made between you and me, that the daughter of the King Sanjaya wants with her heart and soul to make you her husband. And you also want to make her your wife. I have come to know this by signs and symptoms; for affection and love reigning inside can be made out by outward expressions of eyes and face. Whatever this be, O Muni! Now speak truly to me; do never tell a lie. When we went out from the Heavens, we made out that agreement; now remember that.'

34-42. Nārada said: "Thus questioned suddenly by Parvata, I became very much abashed and said: 'O Parvata! This large-eyes princess is ready to

marry me and I am also very much attracted towards her.' When Parvata heard all these, he became very much angry and uttered repeatedly, 'Fie! O Nārada! Fie! O Nārada! First you swore on oath and then you deceived me afterwards. Therefore, O deceiver of friends! I curse you and let your face become that of a monkey.'

When the high-souled Parvata cursed thus, my face turned immediately into that of a monkey, elongated and distorted. I did not excuse him, though he was my sister's son. I also got angry and cursed him, 'Certainly, your journey to the Heavens will be stopped. You will not be able to go to Heaven. O Parvata! When you cursed me so heavily for so trivial a fault of mine, I see you are very mean. Whatever it be, you will have to remain on earth so long.' At this Parvata became very sad and went out of the city. My face became immediately like that of a monkey. The daughter of the King became very sorry to see my face thus distorted into that of a monkey. I did not see her glad as she was before; but her desire to hear my playing with my *vīnā* remained the same as before.

43-52. Vyāsa said: "O Muni! What happened next? How did you get yourself rid of your curse and how did you get your man-like face? Whither did Parvata Ṛṣi go! When and how did you again reunite with each other? Kindly describe all these to me in detail."

Nārada said: "O highly intelligent one! What shall I say about the nature of Māyā? When Parvata went away angrily, the daughter of the King began to serve me with greater care than before. I remained there, though Parvata went away, and seeing my face monkey-like, I became very dejected and sorry and was specially troubled with care and anxiety about what would happen to me hereafter?

The King Sanjaya saw that his daughter Damayantī was slipping into her youth and asked the prime minister about her marriage. He said: 'The time of marriage of my dear daughter has now come; I will now marry her in accordance with due rites and ceremonies. Now tell me particularly about a prince worthy of her, as we like, in beauty, qualifications, largeheartedness,

calmness, patience and heroism and who is of a good family.' The minister said: 'O King! There are many princes on the face of this earth, worthy in all respects of your daughter. Whomever you like, you can call on him and give him your daughter with elephants, horses, chariots, wealth, gems and jewels.'

53-57. Damayantī, knowing the intention of her father, informed the King of her own desire by her nurse and attendant. She told the nurse: 'When my father will sit at his ease and comfort you would go and speak to him in private that I am enchanted with the enchanting *nāda* sound of the great *vīnā* played by the Mahārṣi Nārada and have selected him as my bridegroom. No other person will be dear to me. O Father! Marry me with Nārada and thus fulfil my desire; O Knower of *dharma!* I won't marry anybody but Nārada. O Father! I am now merged in the *nāda* ocean of bliss, sweet and joyful, void of anything destructive of happiness, void of Nakra, alligators, and fishes, Timingala, etc. (injurious animals) and without any salty taste; my mind won't be satisfied with any other thing.'

Here ends the Twenty sixth Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the description by Nārada of his own Moha in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa

Chapter XXVII—the Marriage of Nārada

1-13. Nārada said: "On hearing these words of her daughter from her nurse, the King addressed the queen Kaikeyī, of lovely eyes, standing close by, thus: 'Have you heard what the nurse has said? Damayantī has mentally chosen the monkey-faced Nārada as her husband. What has she thought? Whatever it be, it is no doubt, an act of great foolishness. His face is monkey-like; how can I betroth my daughter to him? Where is an ugly beggar Nārada? And where is my daughter Damayantī? The marriage between them is quite unjust; never it should take place. O beautiful one of good hairs! Better call her before you in private and show her reasons

approved of the *śāstras* and of the aged persons and make her desist from such a rash course.'

On hearing her husband's words, the mother of Damayantī called her in private and said: 'O child! Where is your this beautiful face? And where is the monkey-like face of Nārada? You are smart and quick; how have you been, then, deluded by such a *moha?* O child! You are the daughter of a king! Your body is gentle like a creeper. And Nārada always besmears his body with ashes, so his body is very rough. O spotless one! how will you change your words with him? Why do you show your attachment to an ugly person? What pleasure do you feel thereby? You would be married to a beautiful prince; never follow this rash course; your father is very sorry to hear these from your nurse. O one of soft body! Judge this yourself: what intelligent man is there that is not sorry at the soft Mālatī creeper entwining a thorny tree? Even a stupid silly man would never feed a camel that likes thorns with soft betel leaves. When your marriage time arrives, say to yourself, who will not be sorry to see you going to Nārada and embracing him by his arms? Nobody likes to speak with an ugly-faced one; how will you be able to spend your time with him until your death?'

14-29. Nārada said: "On hearing the mother's words, the gentle Damayantī, with her mind intently fixed on me, spoke to her mother, very much depressed in her spirits. 'O Mother! What good face and beautiful form will avail, who is not in the path of love and who is quite ignorant of amorous feelings and sentiments? And what will the wealth and kingdoms of that unskilled illiterate person avail? The deer that roam in the forest, getting enchanted by the *nāda-rasa*, give up their lives even to the singers. So they are fortunate. But fie to the persons who are illiterate and void of feelings of love! O Mother! Nārada Ṛṣi is well conversant with the science of music with seven *svaras*. No other man save Mahādeva knows this. Living with an illiterate person is courting death at every moment. One devoid of qualifications should be always avoided by all means, though he be wealthy and of a beautiful form. Fie on the friendship with kings that are illiterate and puffed up with vain arrogance! A well-qualified man, be he

even a beggar, is far better to be cultivated friendship with. Leaving other circumstances out of account, even to exchange words with such a well qualified man, makes one highly delighted. The man is very rare in this world, though he be weak, if he be well-versed in the science of music and if he knows *svara, grāma, murchchanā* and be skilled in eight sentiments of love, the svaras—Sadaja, Risabha, Gāndhāra, Madhyama, Panchama, Dhaivata and Nisāda. The man versed in the knowledge of *svara* leads one to the Heaven of Kailāśa, as the rivers Ganges and Sarasvatī by their own merits lead one to Kailāśa. There is not the least doubt in this. He is a Deva in his human body who knows the *svara* measure; and he who does not know the *svara* and its seven grades is a beast, though he has a human form, who finds no delight when he hears the tune regulated by *murchchanā* and the seven *svaras*. Do not consider the deer as beasts, for they get enchanted when they hear the musical notes. The venomous snakes, though they have no ears, get delighted to hear the enchanting *svara-nāda* by their eyes. They even are to be praised; but fie on those human beings who have ears but who do not find any delight when they hear the *nāda!* The little children feel intense pleasure to hear the music, but fie, fie on those elders who are void of these musical sentiments! Does not my father know that Nārada is ornamented with many qualifications? Who is there in the three worlds like him in singing the *Sāma* songs? For this very reason, indeed! I have already selected him as my husband; afterwards, due to a curse, the Muni, the ocean of qualifications, got his face changed into that of a monkey. The Kinnaras, skilled in the science of music, have their faces horse-like; but are they not dear to all? What business have they to get good faces? They enchant the Devas even by their sweet ravishing songs. O Mother! Kindly tell my father that I have already chosen Nārada as my husband. Therefore let him deliver me to his hands, without making any further requests in this matter.'

30-40. Nārada said: "On hearing the words of her daughter Damayantī, that unblameable pure queen, knowing her attachment deep towards me, spoke to the King thus: 'O King! Now celebrate in an auspicious day and on an auspicious moment the auspicious marriage of Damayantī; the

daughter has said that she has already selected Nārada as her bridegroom and it cannot be otherwise.' Thus prompted by the queen, the King Sanjaya performed the marriage ceremony of her daughter in accordance with due rites and customs and in an exceedingly becoming manner.

O Ṛṣi! Thus I entered into the married life and remained there, though my heart constantly burned with the thought of my monkey-face. Whenever the princess used to come to me for my service, I used to get tormented with the remembrance of my monkey-face; but her face beamed with gladness whenever she saw me; never she became sorry nor dejected, even for a moment, to see my face monkey-like. Thus time passed on. One day the Muni Parvata suddenly came there, after making his sojourn to many places of pilgrimages. I showed him a great respect and gladly loved him and greeted him duly; he got himself seated in an excellent *āsana* and became very sorry to see me, for I am his uncle and have entered into married life; my face has become monkey-like. Therefore I am very much depressed in spirits and worried with the sad thought and have become lean and thin. Seeing this he was overwhelmed with pity. He then said: 'O Muni! The curse that I cast on you before out of my anger, I now withdraw. Hear. O Mahārṣi! Let your face be by my merits, again as good as it was before; I now feel pity for the daughter of the King.'

41-52. Hearing thus, my heart also became gentle and instantly with a view to free him of my curse, I said: 'Let your journey to the Heavens be re-established. I now make this special favor on you as regards my curse on you before.' O Dvaipāyana! At his word, before our sight, my face became exceedingly handsome as it was before. The princess Damayantī became very glad and instantly she went to the mother and said: 'O Mother! At the word of Parvata, the great Muni, the curse of your son-in-law has been removed and his face has become handsome as before and the luster of his body has also increased.' The queen was very much filled with ecstasy and joy at Damayantī's words and went hurriedly and informed the King. The King Sanjaya gladly went at once to see the Muni. The great King became

very glad and gave lots of wealth, gems and jewels to me and my nephew Parvata as a dowry.

O Dvaipāyana! Thus I have described to you my old story how I felt the strong influence of Māyā. O fortunate one! Owing to the illusory nature of the *guṇas*, like magic, no embodied being in this world could have been happy before, or he is happy now or he will be happy hereafter. Lust, anger, greed, jealousy, attachment, egotism and vanity—each one of these is very powerfuland nobody is able to conquer them. O Muni! The three *guṇas—sāttva, rājas* and *tāmas*—are the entire causes of the coming into this bodily existence of every being. O Dvaipāyana! Once I was passing through a forest with Bhagavān Viṣṇu, laughing and joking, making merriments when suddenly I was transformed into a woman. Next I became the wife of a king enchanted by Māyā, remained in his house and gave birth to many children."

53-56. Vyāsa said: "O Devaṛṣi! A great doubt has now arisen in my mind at your word. O Muni! You are very wise; how then did you get womanhood; how again did you regain your manhood? Who was the king at whose house you stayed and how did you give birth to children? Describe fully and satisfy my curiosity. Describe to me now the nature of Māyā, extremely wonderful, by which this entire universe, moving and non-moving, all are enchanted. O Muni! Though I have heard your nectar-like words, capable to remove all the doubts, embodying the essence of all the *śāstras*, yet I am not fully satiated."

Here ends the Twenty-seventh Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the marriage of Nārada and his face getting transformed into that of a monkey in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXVIII—Nārada gets a Feminine Form

1-11. Nārada said: "O Thou whose only wealth consists in asceticism! I am now describing to you all those good stories; hear attentively. O Muni! This Māyā and Her power are incomprehensible even by those who are the

foremost amongst the *yogins*. This whole Universe, moving and non-moving, from Brahmā to the blade of grass, is enchanted by that unborn and incomprehensible Māyā; therefore no one can escape from the hands of that Māyā.

One day I wanted to see Hari of wonderful deeds, and went out with *vīnā* in my hand from Satyaloka, to the lovely Śvetadvīpa the residence of Viṣṇu, singing the beautiful *Sāma* hymns in tune with the seven *svaras*. I saw there Gadādhara, the Deva of the Devas, with four arms, holding a disc in one of his hands. He resembled a newly-formed raincloud of *śyāma* color. He was illumined with the luster of the Kaustubha jewel in his breast. He was wearing an yellow apparel. His head was beautified with a lustrous crown. Thus Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa was playing in amorous movements with the daughter of the ocean, fully capable to give one delight and enjoyment. Seeing me, the lovely Devī Kāmalā, dear to Vāsudeva, full of youth and beauty, decorated with ornaments, endowed with all auspicious signs, superior to all the women, went away at once to another room away from the presence of Janārdana. The breast of Lakṣmī Devī was becoming visible even through the cloth thrown over it; therefore she went hurriedly to the inner compartment. Seeing this I asked Janārdana, the Deva of the Devas, the Lord of the worlds, and holding a garland of forest grown flowers thus: 'O Bhagavān! O Slayer of Mura! O Padmanābha! Why has Kāmalā Devī, the Mother of all the *lokas*, on seeing me coming here, gone out of Your presence? O Lord of the worlds! I am not a rogue nor a cheat; I have conquered my passions and am become an ascetic; I have conquered even Māyā. Therefore O Deva! What is the cause of the departure of the Kāmalā Devī from here? Kindly explain this to me.'

12-20. Nārada said: O Dvaipāyana! Hearing my words, expressive of my pride, Janārdana smiled and spoke to me in words sweet like the sound of a *vīnā:* 'O Nārada! The rule in such cases is this: The wife of any man whatsoever ought not to stay before any other male outsider than her husband. O Nārada! It is very hard to conquer Māyā; even those, who by *prāṇāyāma* have conquered their *prāṇa-vāyu*, their organs of senses and their

food, even those *sāṅkhya-yogins* and the Devas are not able to conquer Māyā. The words that you have just now uttered that you have conquered Māyā are not fit to come out of your mouth; for by your knowledge of music, it seems that you are enchanted with the sounds of the music. Brahmā, I, Śiva and the other Munis, none of us has been able as yet to conquer that Unborn Māyā; how, then, can it be possible that you or any other man can conquer that Māyā? Any embodied being, be he a Deva, a human being, or a bird, no one is able to conquer that Māyā Unborn. Whoever is endowed with the three *guṇas*, be he a knower of the *Vedas*, or a *yogī*, a conqueror of his passions, or all-knowing, is not able to conquer Māyā. The Great Time, Kāla, though formless, is one form of Māyā and fashions this universe. All the *jīvas* are subservient to this Kāla, be he a good literary person, of a mediocre nature, or an illiterate brute. This Kāla sometimes makes even a religious man who knows *dharma* confounded and deluded; so you know the nature of Māyā is very incomprehensible and Her ways mysterious.'

21-23. O Dvaipāyana! Thus saying, Viṣṇu stopped. I was greatly astonished and asked that Eternal Vāsudeva, the Deva of the Devas, the Lord of the World, 'O Lord of Ramā! What is the form of Māyā? How is She? What is the measure of Her strength? Where She resides? Whose substratum is She? Kindly tell these to me. O Preserver of the Universe! I am greatly desirous to see Māyā; show Her to me quickly. O Lord of Ramā! I am very eager to know Māyā. Be graciously pleased to describe to me the glory of Māyā.'

24-36. Viṣṇu said: "Māyā resides everywhere throughout this whole Universe; Her nature consists of the three *guṇas;* She is the substratum of all; She is omniscient, and acknowledged by all; invisible, and of diverse forms. O Nārada! If you want to see Māyā, then come quickly and mount with me on Garuḍa; we both will go elsewhere and I will show you that Māyā, invincible by those who have not conquered themselves. O son of Brahmā! Don't be depressed when you see Māyā.'

Thus saying, Janārdana Hari remembered Garuḍa and instantly he came to Hari. Janārdana mounted on him, gladly made me also get up on his back

and took me with Him. In a moment Garuḍa went, at his command, with the speed of wind to the forest where Bhagavān desired to go. Mounted on Garuḍa we passed and saw on our way beautiful forests, nice lakes, rivers, towns, villages, huts of cultivators, towns close to the mountains, huts for cowherds, cowsheds, the beautiful hermitages of the Munis, lovely *jhils*, tanks and lakes beautified with big lotuses, flocks of ewes, packs of wild boars, etc., until, at last, we came to a place close to Kanauj. I saw there a beautiful divine tank; nice lotuses blossomed there, spreading their sweet fragrance all around; the bees were making lovely humming noise and ravishing away the minds of men; various flowers, lilies, etc., were beautifying the place; Geese, Kārandavas, and Chakravākas and other acquatic fowls were playing with their cackling noise, the water was very sweet like milk; the tank was defying, as it were, the ocean. Seeing such a wonderful tank, Bhagavān told me: 'O Nārada! See, how beautiful is this deep tank with its clear waters, and adorned all over with lotuses! The sweet voiced flamingoes are roaming on the lake making lovely sounds!

37-54. We will bathe in this tank and then go to the city Kanauj.' Thus saying, He made me descend quickly from Garuḍa and He himself also got down. Then Bhagavān smilingly caught hold of my forefinger, and repeatedly praising the glory of the tank, took me to its bank. We rested a while on the cool umbrageous beautiful bank when Śrī Bhagavān said: 'O Muni! Better bathe you first in this tank; next I will bathe in this very holy pool of water. O Nārada! Look! Look! How clear crystal-like is the water of this pool like the heart of a saint; see how it smells also fragrantly in contact with the lotuses on it.' When Bhagavān spoke thus to me, I kept my *vīnā* and deerskin aside and gladly went to the edge of the tank. Washing then my hands and feet I tied my hair lock and, taking *kuśa* grass, I performed my *ācamana* and purifying myself, began to bathe myself in that tank.

While I was bathing, Hari was looking at me; by the time I took a dip, I saw that I quit my male form and got a beautiful female form. Hari took away, then, my deerskin and *vīnā* and mounting on Garuḍa, went away in a moment to His own residence. Getting the female form and decorated with

excellent ornaments, my memory of my previous male form vanished at once; I forgot all about my famous *vīnā* and forgot also Jagannātha, the Deva of the Devas. I then came out of the tank in that enchanting woman form, saw the pool of water filled with clear limpid water and adorned with lotuses. Seeing that, I began to think: "What is this?" and I became very much astonished.

While I was thus meditating in my woman form, a king named Tāladhvaja, came there all on a sudden on a chariot, accompanied by numerous elephants and horses. The King looked like a second Cupid; he was decorated with various ornaments on his limbs; he was just entering into his youth and he looked very enchanting. The King saw me at once and looking at me decked with divine ornaments and my moon-like face, was greatly astonished and asked me: 'O Kalyāni! Who are you? Are you the daughter of a man or of a Nāga (serpent) or of a Gandharva or of a Deva? I see you are now in your youth; why are you alone here? O Lovely-eyed! Has any fortunate person married you? Or are you still unmarried? Speak all these truly to me. O fair-haired one! What are you looking at in this tank? O one enchanting, as it were, like Cupid! What is your desire? Say, O slanting-eyed! My mind is ravished to hear your cuckoo-like voice. O one of thin waist! Choose me as your husband enjoy various excellent things as you like.'

Here ends the Twenty-eighth Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on Nārada's getting the feminine form in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIX—Nārada as a Woman

1-11. Nārada said: "O Dvaipāyana! When the King Tāladhvaja asked me thus, I thought over earnestly and said thus: 'I do not know whose daughter I am; nor do I know quite certainly where are my father and mother; one man placed me here on this tank and has gone away, whither I do not know. O King! I am now a helpless orphan; what shall I do now?

Where to go? What to do by which I can have my welfare? I am all the while thinking on these. O King! Destiny is powerful; I have not the least control over it; you know *dharma* and you are a King. Do now as you like. O King! Do nourish me; I have no father, no mother, nor any acquaintances and friends; there is no place for me also to stand on; therefore I am now your dependent.'

When I spoke thus, the King looked at my face and became love-stricken for me; he then told his attendants to bring an excellent rectangular and spacious palanquin to be carried on four men's shoulders, gilt and adorned with jewels and pearls, where soft sheets were spread inside and covered all over with silken cloths. Instantly the servants went away and brought for me a beautiful palanquin. I got on it to serve the best wishes of the King. The King also gladly took me home. In an auspicious day and in an auspicious moment he married me in accordance with due rites and ceremonies in the presence of the Holy Fire.

12. I became dearer to him than even his own life and the King, with great fondness, kept my name as Saubhāgya Sundarī.

13-20. The King then began to sport with me amorously according to the rules of the *kāma-śāstra* in various ways and with great enjoyment and pleasure. He then left all his kingly duties and state affairs and he began to remain day and night with me deeply immersed in amorous sports; so much his mind was merged in me in these plays that he could not notice the long time that passed away in the interval. He used to drink the Vāruṇī wine and, forsaking all the state affairs, began to enjoy me in nice gardens, beautiful lakes, lovely palaces, beautified houses, excellent mountains and enviable forests and became completely subservient to me. O Dvaipāyana! Being incessantly engaged with the King in amorous sports and remaining obedient to him, my previous body, male ideas, or the birth of Muni—nothing whatsoever came in my memory. I remained always attached to him, being obedient to him with a view to be happy and I constantly thought over 'this King is very much attached to me, I am his dearest wife to all others; always he thinks of me, I am his chief consort, capable to give

him enjoyment.' My mind became entirely his and I completely forgot the eternal *brahma-jñāṇa* and the knowledge of the *dharma-śāstras*.

21-31. O Muni! Thus engaged in various amorous sports, twelve years passed away as if a moment, and I could not perceive that. Then I became pregnant; and the King became very glad and performed all the ceremonies pertaining to my impregnation and holding of the child in my womb. In order to satisfy me, the King used to ask me always what things I liked; I used to be very much abashed; seeing this, the King used to be still more glad. Ten months thus passed away and in an auspicious *lagna* and when the asterism was favorably strong, I gave birth to a son; the King became very glad and great festivities were held on the birth ceremony of the child. O Dvaipāyana! When the period of the birth-impurity was over, the King saw the face of the child and was greatly delighted; I then became the dearest wife of the King. Two years after again I became impregnated; the second auspicious son was born. The King gave the name Sudhanvā to the second son and on the authority of the Brāhmaṇas, kept the name of the eldest son as Vīravarmā. Thus I gave birth to twelve sons, in due course of time, to the King's great liking; and I was engaged in rearing up those children and thus I remained enchanted. Again in due course, I gave birth to eight sons; thus my household was filled with happiness. The King performed the marriage ceremonies of all those children duly and befittingly; and our family became very large with sons and their wives.

32-52. Then I had some grandsons, and they increased my attachment and consequent delusion with all sorts of playful sports. Sometimes I felt happy and prosperous and sometimes I felt pain and sorrow when my sons fell ill. Then my body and mind became very much troubled with sorrows. Again the quarrels amongst my sons and my daughters-in-law brought terrible pain and remorse in my mind. O best of Munis! Thus I was greatly immersed in the terrible ocean of these imaginary thoughts, sometimes happy and sometimes painful, and I forgot my previous knowledge and the knowledge of the *śāstras*. I was merged in the thought of myself being a woman and lost myself entirely in doing the household affairs. I began to

think that 'I have so many daughters-in-law; so many powerful sons of mine are playing together in my house; Oh! I am fortunate and full of merits amongst women' and thus my egoistic pride increased. Not for a moment even occurred the thought that I had been Nārada; Bhagavān had deceived me by His Māyā.

O Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana! I was deluded by Māyā and passed away my time in the thought that 'I am the king's wife, chaste and of good conduct following good *āchāra;* I have so many sons and grandsons; I am blessed in this Saṁsāra and that I am so happy and prosperous.' One powerful king of a distant country turned out an inveterate enemy of my husband came to the city of Kanauj to fight with my husband, accompanied by chariots, elephants and a fourfold army. That enemy besieged the city with his army; my sons and grandsons went out and fought valiantly with him but owing to the great Destiny, the enemies killed all my sons. The King retreated and returned to his palace. Next I heard that powerful King killed all my sons and grandsons and had gone back to his country with his army. I then hurriedly went to the battlefield, crying loudly. O long-lived One! Seeing my sons and grandsons lying on the ground, in that horrible and distressed state, I became merged in the ocean of sorrows and lamented and wept loudly and wildly, 'O my sons! Where have you gone leaving me thus? Alas! The pernicious Fate is very dominant, and very painsgiving and indomitable. It has killed me today.'

By this time, Bhagavān Madhusūdana came to me there in the garb of a beautiful aged Brāhmaṇa. His dress was sacred and lovely; it seemed he was versed in the *Vedas*. Seeing me weeping distressedly in the battlefield he said: 'O Devī! O cuckoo-voiced one! It seems you are the mistress of a prosperous house and you have got husband sons! O thin-bodied one! Why are you thus lamenting and feeling yourself distressed! All this is simply illusion caused by *moha;* think; who are you? whose sons are these? Now think of your best hereafter. Don't weep, get up and be comfortable, O good-eyed one!

53-54. O Devī! To show respect to your sons, etc., gone to the other worlds, offer them water and *til*. The friends of the deceased ought to take their bath in a place of pilgrimage; never they should bathe in their houses. Know this as ordained by *dharma*.'

55-66. Nārada said: "O Dvaipāyan! When the old Brāhmaṇa thus addressed me, I and the King and other friends got up. Bhagavān Madhusūdana causing this creation, in the form of a Brāhmaṇa, led the way and I followed him quickly to that sacred place of pilgrimage. The Viṣṇu Bhagavān, the Lord Janārdana Hari in the form of a Brāhmaṇa, kindly took me to the tank named Pumtīrtha (male *tīrtha*) and said: 'O one going like an elephant! Better take your bath in this tank; forego your sorrows that are of no use; now the time has arrived to offer water to your sons. Better think that you had millions of sons born to you in your previous births and for that your millions of sons and daughters lost their lives; you had millions of fathers, husbands, and brothers and you lost them again; O Devī! Now tell me for whom you will now grieve? All these, then, are merely mental phenomena; this world is full of delusion, false like a mirage and dreamlike; the embodied souls simply get pains and sorrows and nothing else.'

Nārada said: "On hearing his words, I went to bathe in that Pumtīrtha, as ordered by him. Taking a dip, I found that, in an instant, I became a man; Bhagavān Hari, in his own proper form, was standing on the edge with a *vīnā* in his hand. O Brāhmaṇa! When getting out of the water, I came to the bank and saw the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, pure consciousness then flashed in my heart. Then I thought that 'I am Nārada; I have come to this place and being deluded by the Māyā of Hari, I got the female form.' When I was thinking thus, Hari exclaimed, 'O Nārada! Get up; what are you doing, standing in the water?' I was astonished; and, recollecting my feminine nature, very severe indeed, began to think why I was again transformed into a male form."

Here ends the Twenty-ninth Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the Nārada's getting again his male form in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXX—the Glory of Mahā-Māyā

1-14. Nārada said: "O best of Munis! The King was greatly astonished to see me dip in the tank in a female figure and get up from the tank in a male figure and thought, 'Where is my dearest wife? And how is this Nārada Muni suddenly come here?' The King, not seeing his wife, lamented very much and cried frequently, 'O my dear wife! Where have you gone, leaving me here thus. Without you, O one of spacious hips! my life, palace and kingdom, all are quite useless. O lotus-eyed one! What shall I do? O smiling one! Why is not my life leaving of my body, suffering thus from thy separation? Without you, my sentiment of love has left me forever. O large-eyed one! Now I am lamenting for you. O dear! Better give me your sweet reply; the love that you expressed at our first union, where has it gone now? O one with good eyebrows! Are you sunk in the water and have you given up your life? Or are you devoured by fishes or crocodiles? Or are you carried away by Varuṇa, the Deva of the waters, to my great misfortune? O one of beautiful limbs! You are blessed, as you have gone away with your sons; O sweet-speaking one! Your affection for them was not artificial. Is it right for you to go up to the Heavens, attached by affection for your sons, leaving me your distressed husband alone, thus weeping for your separation? O dear! I have lost both you and my sons; yet death is not carrying me away. O! How hard is my lot! What to do? Where to go? Rāma is not now in this world. He knew what was the pain caused by the separation from one's dearest wife. Oh! The cruel Fate has ordained very unwisely with great inconsistency the periods of parting from one another at different periods; when their minds and all other things are exactly the same in all circumstances of pleasure and pain. The practice of Satī (burning with one's deceased husband), as ordained by the Munis, is certainly for the good of the chaste women; but it would have been good

no doubt, were there such practices allowed for the men to burn themselves with their deceased wives.'

Bhagavān Hari then spoke to the lamenting King in reasonable words and consoled him thus: 'O King! Why are you thus troubling yourself with pain and sorrow? Where has gone your dearest wife? Have you not heard anything of *śāstras?* or have you not taken any shelter of any wise man?

15-27. Who was your wife? Who are you? Of what nature was your union and disunion, and where did it take place? The union of wives and sons in this *saṁsāra* is momentary, like the meetings of persons on boats while crossing a river. O King! Now go home. There is no use in your weeping thus in vain; the union and disunion of men are always under the control of Fate, the Daiva; therefore the wise should not lament for them. O King! Your union with the woman took place here; and now you have lost that beautiful, thin-bodied, large-eyed woman here also. Her father and mother you have not seen; you have got her like what is heard in the story of the crow and the *tāl* fruit; as you got her wonderfully, so you have lost her wonderfully. O King! Do not grieve; Time cannot be ruled over; go home and enjoy yourself subservient to Time. That beautiful woman has gone away in the manner she came to you; you ought to do your stately affairs in the way as you used to do before as the ruler of all. O King! Consider that even if you weep all day and night, that woman will never return; why then are you giving vent to your sorrows in vain?

Go now and have recourse to the path of *yoga,* and thus while away your time. The enjoyable things come in course of time and they go away again in due course; therefore in this world of no gain whatsoever, the wise should never lament. Continuous pleasure or continuous pain does not always take place; pleasure and pain are never steady; they rotate always like a rotary instrument. Therefore, O King! Make your mind calm and quiet and rule happily your kingdom; or make over the charge of the kingdom to your sons and retire to the forest. This human body is seldom obtained; it is frail; therefore on getting that body it is advisable to practice the realization of the Supreme. O King! This organ of generation and this

tongue reside also with the beasts. The peculiarity of human body is that knowledge can be realized in it, and not in any other inferior births. Therefore leave your home, leave your sorrows for your wife; all this is the Māyā of Bhagavān; by Her the world is deluded.'

28-37. Nārada said: 'Bhagavān Hari speaking thus, the King bowed down to Him, the Deva of the Devas and finishing the bathing duties returned to his home. He then became possessed of dispassion and discrimination, and making over the charge of his kingdom to his grandsons, retired to the forest and realized the Supreme Knowledge. When the King went away, Bhagavān began to laugh and laugh, looking at me again and again.

I then told him, 'O Deva! You have deceived me. I now come to know how great is the power of Māyā. O Janārdana! Now I remember all that I did in my feminine form. Tell me, O Hari! O Deva of the Devas! How I lost my previous consciousness, when I got down into the tank and bathed in it? O Lord of the world! Why was I enchanted when I got the female form and when I got the King as my husband like Śachī's getting Indra. The same mind I had; the old *jivātmā* was there and the previous subtle body was there; how then I lost their memories? O Lord! Give out the cause of it and clear my doubts; a great doubt has arisen in my mind. Many enjoyments I had in my female form, drinking liquor and other prohibited things I tasted; O Slayer of Madhu! What is the cause of all these? I could not know then that I was Nārada, as I now recognize clearly what I was in and what I did in my female form. Say the reason of all these things.'

38-53. Viṣṇu said: "Know, O Intelligent Nārada! That all this is merely the pastime of Māyā. There are many states going on in the bodies of all the living beings. The embodied beings have got their waking, dream, deep sleep and *turīya* beyond all the three above-mentioned states; then why you doubt that when there is another body, there would be also the change in the states? When a man sleeps, he knows not anything, he does not hear anything; but when he gets awake, he again comes to know everything completely. The *citta* gets itself moved by sleep; then mind gets different states by dreams and there arises a variety of feelings. 'A mad elephant is

coming to kill me, and I am not able to fly away. What to do? Where to go? There is no place where I can quickly go!' Thus in dreams, there arise different mental states. Sometimes we see in dreams that our departed grandfathers are come in our houses. 'I am seeing them, talking with them and I am dining with them.' Whatever pain and pleasure are felt in dreams, when they awake, they know of what happened in their dreams and can also describe in details, recollecting what had then happened.

O Nārada! Know the power of Māyā incomprehensible as the things seen in dreams cannot be certainly known that all those are false. O Muni! Neither I, nor Śambhu nor Brahmā can measure the power wielded by Māyā and Her three *guṇas*, very hard to fathom. How, then, can any ordinary mortal know them? Therefore, O Nārada! None is able to fathom Māyā. This world, moving and non-moving, is fashioned out of the triple *guṇas* of Māyā; nothing whatsoever can exist without them. The predominant *guṇa* in Me is *sāttva;* but *rājas* and *tāmas* also exist in me; even being the Lord of this world, I cannot override the three *guṇas*. So your father Brahmā is predominantly in *rājo-guṇa;* but *sāttva* and *tāmas* never leave him. Our Mahādeva is predominantly in *tāmo-guṇa*, but *sāttva* and *rājas* are always with him. Therefore, no being can exist as separate from the three *guṇas;* this point I have settled in *śruti*.

Therefore, O Lord of the Munis! Quit this endless *moha* for the world caused by Māyā, and very hard to get over and worship Bhagavatī, Who is of the nature of Brāhman. O intelligent one! Now you have seen the power of Māyā; you have enjoyed many things produced by Māyā and you have realized the extremely wonderful nature of Her. Then why do you ask me further on this point?"

Here ends the Thirtieth Chapter of the Sixth Skandha on the glory of Mahā-Māyā in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXI—the Glory of Māyā

18-22. Nārada continued: "O Muni! When my Father learnt the cause of my cares, he smiled and spoke to me in sweet words: 'O child! Even the Devas, the high-souled Munis, the wise ascetics and the *yogīs* subsisting on air alone are not able to conquer this Māyā. O Nārada! The power of Māyā is so very great that I, Viṣṇu and Śambhu the Lord of Umā—none are able to know Her power. That Mahā-māyā is creating, preserving and dissolving this world by Time, *karma*, Nature and other efficient causes. O child! Know Her to be inconceivable and unapproachable. O intelligent one! Do not be sorry nor should you be surprised about Māyā's great strength, for we all are deluded by Her.'

23-25. "O Dvaipāyana! Thus advised by my Father, my wonder disappeared. I then asked permission of my Father Padmayoni (lotus-born) and went out on tour round the sacred places of pilgrimages and on my way, seeing by and by the chief *tīrthas*, I have now come here. Therefore, O Muni! Dost thou relinquish your sorrows for the extinction of the Kuru dynasty and remain here and pass your time in great joy and happiness. One must bear the fruits of one's *karma*, good or bad; knowing this fully roam at your will wherever you like."

26-40. Vyāsa said: "O King! Mahārṣi Nārada thus kindling knowledge in me, went away; I also thought over his words. On the banks of the river Sarasvatī, I composed this Devī Bhāgavatam to pass away my time during the excellent period of Sārasvata *kalpa*. This *Purāṇam* is excellent; it is composed on the authority of the *Vedas;* all doubts are removed by it; many nice events are narrated here. Therefore, O King! Not the least doubt should be entertained. As a magician makes the wooden dolls dance in his hands at his will, so this world-enchanting Māyā is making this world dance—moving and non-moving, from Brahmā down to the blades of grass and all human beings.

O King! Know Māyā's triple *guṇas* to be the cause of this mind consisting of five organs of senses, that follows the *citta* (mind, *buddhi* and *ahaṅkāra*).

Actions arise from the causes thereof; there is no doubt about this; what doubt, then, there can arise that all these creatures of different temperaments will come out of the different *guṇas* of Māyā? the persons in contact with the *māyik guṇas* become peaceful, terrible and stupid. How, then, can they exist bereft of them? As the cloth cannot exist without threads, so the embodied beings cannot exist in the world without the triple *guṇas* of Māyā. There is no doubt about this. As a pot cannot be made without clay, so these bodies—Devas, human or birds—cannot be created without the *guṇas*.

Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, too, are possessed of those three *guṇas* and therefore they become sometimes happy and satisfied, sometimes unhappy and dissatisfied, and sometimes they become sad and remorseful as they are under the influence of one *guṇa* or the other. Brahmā happens at times to be full of wisdom and knowledge, his temper peaceful, sweet and pleasant and his soul rapt in *samādhi,* when he becomes possessed of *sāttva-guṇa;* again when he is void of *sāttva* and filled with *rājo-guṇa*, His temper becomes unpleasant and his appearance gets dark and awful everywhere; and when he becomes grossly *tāmasik*, He becomes sorrowful and bereft entirely of intelligence.

41-51. Viṣṇu, when resting in *sāttva*, becomes peaceful, sweet-tempered, and full of knowledge; when *rājo-guṇa* preponderates in Him, He becomes void of sweetness and becomes awful to all the beings. Rudra too becomes peaceful and pleasant under the *sāttva-guṇa*, awful and void of sweetness under the *rājo-guṇa*, and becomes sad and stupid under the *tāmo-guṇa*.

O King! When Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara and the solar and lunar Kings, the fourteen lords of Manvantaras, Manu and others are under the control of the *māyik guṇas*, what to speak of other ordinary mortals, men and the other *jīvas?* The whole world is under the control of Māyā; the Devas, men and all other beings. None should doubt on this point. All the embodied beings labor under the directions of Māyā; never can they work independently. This Māyā is again always residing in the Highest Essence, the *saṁvit* or the Universal Pure Consciousness. Thus Māyā is dependent

on the Highest Goddess, Who is of the nature of *saṁvit*, and, stimulated by Her, resides in the hearts of all the *jīvas*. Therefore one ought to meditate, worship and bow down before the Bhagavatī, the Creatrix of Māyā Who is of the nature of *saṁvit*—Pure Existence, Intelligence and Bliss. Thus She becomes gracious and merciful and liberates the *jīvas*, giving them Her realization and drawing together Her own Māyā away from them. This whole cosmos is nothing but Māyā, and the Consciousness (*saṁvit*) of the nature of Brahman is the Lord of Māyā. For this reason that Most Beautiful One in the triple worlds, the Devī Bhagavatī is known by the name Bhuvaneśvarī, the Great Lady of the worlds.

52-60. O King! If the *jīvas* can fix their hearts on that *saṁvit*, then Māyā, born of the real and unreal, is quite unable to do any harm to them. No other Deva than the Bhuvaneśvarī, of the nature of pure existence, intelligence and bliss is able to remove this Māyā. O King! Darkness cannot destroy darkness; but light from the Sun, Moon, lightning or fire destroys it instantly. Therefore it is highly incumbent on us to worship the Lady of Māyā, the *saṁvit*, the Mother with a cheerful heart to remove the Māyā and Her *guṇas*.

O King! Now I have narrated to you all the events concerning the killing of Vṛtrāsura that you asked. What more do you want to hear now? O one devoted to vows! I have now described the first half of that *Purāṇa*, which describes in detail the glory of Śrī Devī Bhagavatī. This *Purāṇa*, the secret of this Mother of the whole Universe, is not to be disclosed indiscriminately to anybody. Those that are peaceful, self-restrained, devoted and possessed of Bhakti to the Devī, the disciples that are devoted to their *gurus* and the eldest son, those are the fit recipients thereof. Whoever reads or hears with greatest devotion this *Mahā-Purāṇam*, equivalent to the *Vedas*, fraught with sound proofs and the essence of all talks, becomes, in this world, possessed of great wealth, becomes wise and passes his time in the greatest happiness. There is no doubt about this.

Here ends the Thirty-first Chapter on the Sixth Skandha on the glory of Māyā in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa. The Sixth Skandha Finished.

Seventh Skandha

Chapter I—the Solar and Lunar Dynasties

1-5. Sūta said: "Glad to hear the excellent divine stories of the Solar and Lunar races, the virtuous son of Parīkṣit, King Janamejaya, again asked: 'O Lord! I am now very eager to hear the increase of the two lines of Kings. O sinless one! You know everything. So kindly describe in detail the pure histories, capable to destroy sins, of the kings and their characters. The kings of the Lunar and the Solar races were great *bhaktas* of the Highest Śakti, Śrī Bhagavatī Devī; thus I have heard. O Muni! Who doesn't wants to hear further on the glorious anecdotes of the *bhaktas* of Śrī Devī?' When the Rājarsi asked thus, the Muni Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāya, the son of Satyavatī began to narrate gladly the several deeds of the Kings."

6-13. Vedavyāsa said: "O King! I am now narrating to you in detail the origin, etc., of the Lunar and the Solar dynasties as well as of other kings in their connection. Hear attentively. The four-faced Brahmā sprang from the navel of Viṣṇu; engaged in practicing *tapasyā,* he began to worship the Mahā-Devī Durgā, extremely hard to conceive. Mahā-Devī, pleased at his worship, granted a boon to Brahmā. Brahmā, the Grandsire of all the *lokas* on thus getting the boon, became ready to create the world; but he could not create all of a sudden the human beings. Though the creation was eternally fashioned by the Pramātmā Bhagavatī, the four-faced Brahmā thinking over in his mind variously, could not quickly spread it out and accomplish it as a veritable fact.

Therefore He, the Prajāpati, first created seven mind-born sons. These were known by the names of Marīchi, Atri, Angirā, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasiṣṭha. Next sprang Rudra from the anger of Prajāpati, Nārada from his lap; Dakṣa from his right thumb. Thus Sanaka and the other Ṛṣis were also his mind-born sons. O King! The wife of Dakṣa was born from the left thumb of Prajāpati; this all-beautiful daughter is well known in all the

Purāṇas by the name of Vīrinī and Asiknī. Nārada the chief of the Devaṛṣis was born on some other occasion in her womb."

14-17. Janamejaya said: "O Brāhmaṇa! A great doubt arises in me to hear that the great ascetic Nārada was born of Dakṣa in the womb of Vīrinī. The Muni Nārada indeed was the son of Brahmā; moreover be was the foremost of the ascetics and especially endowed with the knowledge of *dharma;* how, then, can he be born of the womb of the Dakṣa's wife Vīrinī? Well if that be so, then describe in detail, that wonderful story of the birth of Nārada in the womb of Vīrinī.

18-31. O Muni! Under whose curse, the high-souled Nārada though very wise, had to leave his first body and be born again?"

Vyāsa said: "O King, Brahmā, the Self-born, with a view to create offspring, ordered first Dakṣa: 'Go and multiply innumerable children for the increase of the world.' Thus ordered by his father the Prajāpati Dakṣa produced five thousand powerful and heroic sons in the womb of Vīrinī. Seeing all the sons of Dakṣa desirous to multiply, the Devaṛṣi Nārada urged on, as it were, by Fate, began to laugh at them. 'How do you desire to multiply when you know not the dimensions and capacity of earth; so you will, no doubt, be put to ridicule and laughter. Rather, if you proceed on work, knowing beforehand the earth's capacity, your efforts will be fruitful. Otherwise, your attempt will no doubt end in failures. Alas! You are awfully illiterate! Not knowing the dimensions of the world, you are ready to multiply your progeny; how, then, can you meet with success?'

Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing all on a sudden these words, Haryaśva and other sons began to speak with each other, 'What this Muni has told is very true. Let us then ascertain the earth's dimensions; we can easily multiply afterwards.' Thus saying, they all went out to reconnoitre the earth. Thus excited at Nārada's words, some went eastward, some southwards, some towards the north and some went to the west all simultaneously and as they liked, to make a survey of the earth. When the sons went away, Dakṣa

became exceedingly sorry on their absence. Bent again on multiplying, he begat other sons; those sons again wanted to procreate.

Seeing them, Nārada again laughed and said: 'Alas! What fools are you! Not knowing the dimensions of the earth, why are you ready to procreate?' They were deluded by Nārada's words, took them as true, and went out as their elder brothers did. Not being able to see those sons, Prajāpati Dakṣa became very sorrowful for them and cursed Nārada in rage.

32-38. Dakṣa said: 'O Evil-minded One! You have destroyed my sons; so be yourself destroyed; you will have to be born in the womb for your sin in causing the death of my sons; you have caused my sons to go abroad; so you must be born as my son.' Thus cursed by Dakṣa, Nārada had to take his birth in the womb of Vīrinī. I heard also that the Prajāpati Dakṣa begat afterwards sixty daughters in her womb. O King! Dakṣa, the great knower of *dharma*, then gave up the sorrows for his sons and married his thirteen daughters to the high-souled Kaśyapa, ten daughters to Dharma, twenty-seven daughters to the Moon, two to Bhṛgu, four to Ariṣṭanemi, two to Kriśāśva and the remaining two to Angirā. Their sons and grandsons, the Devas and Dānavas, became powerful but antagonistic towards each other. All of them were heroes and very passionate; so, deluded by their greed and jealousy, they quarrelled amongst each other."

Here ends the First Chapter in the Seventh Skandha on the beginning of the narrative of the Solar and the Lunar lines of kings in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter II—Piercing of the Eyes of Cyavana Muni

1. Janamejaya said: "O Highly Fortunate One! Kindly narrate in detail the spread of the families of those kings in the Solar line who were born and who were especially endowed with the knowledge of *dharma*."

2-8. Vyāsa said: "O Bhārata! I now speak to you exactly what I heard of yore from Nārada, the best of the Ṛṣis, how the Solar race spread. Once on

an occasion, the Muni Śrīṁān Nārada on tour, came at his will to my holy hermitage on the beautiful banks of the Sarasvatī river. On seeing him I bowed down at his feet and then remained standing before him. I then gave him a seat and worshipped him with great esteem.

I then said to him: 'O Best of Munis! You are worshipped by the whole universe; my retreat is sanctified by your coming. O all-knowing one! Kindly narrate the histories of the Kings that were famous in the family of the seventh Manu; they were unequalled as far as their origin was concerned and their influence as well was wonderful. Therefore I am very eager to know in detail the history of the Solar race. O Muni! Describe shortly or in detail as the circumstances may require.' O King! When I made this question, Nārada, the knower of the Highest Reality, gladly smiled, and addressing me, began to describe the history of the Solar race.

9-26. Nārada said: 'O son of Satyavatī! The history of the royal families is very holy and pleasant to hear; the more so when they are heard, one acquires *dharma* and wisdom; therefore do you hear. In ancient times, Brahmā sprang from the navel-lotus of Viṣṇu and created the world. This is well-known in every *Purāṇa*. That self-born, all-powerful, all- knowing, the doer of all, the Universal Soul practiced *tapas* in ancient times for *ajuta* (ten thousand) years. By virtue of that *tapas*, He got special powers to create the world. He meditated on the Auspicious Mother, and getting from Her the excellent powers, He created first the mind-born sons, all endowed with auspicious signs. Of them, Marīchi became well known in this act of creation. His son Kaśyapa was respected by all and he was of great celebrity. He had thirteen wives, all daughters of Dakṣa Prajāpati. The Devas, Daityas, Yakṣas, Pannagas, beasts and birds all sprang from him. Therefore this creation is called the Kāśyapī creation.

Amongst the Devas, the Sun is specially famous; his other name is Vivasvān. His son was named Vaivasvata Manu; he was a famous king. Besides, Manu had nine more sons. Ikṣvāku was the eldest. Their names are Nābhāga, Dhṛṣṭa, Śaryāti, Nariśyanta, Prānśu, Nṛga, Diṣṭa, Karūsa and

Ṛsadhra. Ikṣvāku, the son of Manu was born first. He had one hundred sons, and Vikuksi was the wisest and eldest of these.

I am now narrating how the nine sons born afterwards of Manu, spread their families. Ambariṣa was the son of Nābhāga; he was very truthful, powerful, and religious. He always governed his subjects justly. Dhāṛṣṭaka was the son of Dhṛṣṭa; though he was a Kṣatriya, he attained to Brāhmaṇahood. He was naturally weak in fighting; always be was engaged in the works relating to the Brāhmaṇas. Ānarta was the well-known son and Sukanyā was the beautiful daughter of Śaryāti. King Śaryāti gave his beautiful daughter in marriage to the blind Cyavana Ṛṣi; but the Ṛṣi, though blind, got his beautiful eyes again by the good character of the daughter. We heard that the Aśvins, the twin sons of the Sun, gave him back his eyesight.'

27-29. Janamejaya said: "O Brāhmaṇa! How is it that the King Śaryāti married his lovely-eyed daughter Sukanyā to the blind Cyavana Muni? I have got a great doubt on this point. The King gives his daughter in marriage to a blind person if she be deformed, ill-qualified or void of female signs. But the daughter in this case was beautiful. How then Śaryāti, the Chief of Kings, gave over his daughter, knowing that the Ṛṣi was blind? O Brāhmaṇa! I am always an object of favor to you; so explain to me the cause of it."

30-50. Sūta said: "Glad to hear these words of Janamejaya, the Muni Dvaipāyana smilingly said: 'Śaryāti, the son of Vaivasvata, had four thousand married wives. All of them were endowed with auspicious signs and beautiful all of them were daughters of kings. They all were very obliging and dear to their husbands. But out of all of these, the King had only one daughter exceptionally lovely and beautiful. The father and all the mothers loved exceedingly that sweet-smiling daughter. Not very far off the city, there was a beautiful lake of clear waters, like the Mānasarovara lake. A *ghāt* made of stones descended into the lake. Swans, Kārandavas, Chakravākas, Datyu'has, Sārasas and other birds used to play on its waters. Five varieties of lotuses were there in full bloom, bees were humming there

all around. Various trees, śāl, Tamāla, Sarala, Punnāgas, Aśokas, Banyans, Peepuls, Kadambas, rows of banana trees, Jambīrs, Dates, Panasas, Betelnut trees, coconut trees, Ketakas, Kānchanas and other various beautiful trees encircled round the lake. Within these, the white Yūthikās, Mallikās and other creepers and shrubs were seen beautifying the scenery. Especially there were, amongst them, Jack trees, Mango trees, tamarind trees, Karanjas, Kutakas, Palāśas, Neem trees, Khadiras, Bel trees, and āmalaki trees; and

peacocks were sounding their notes, cuckoos were cooing their beautiful voices.

Close to that place, in a sacred grove covered over by trees, was staying Bhṛgu's son Cyavana Muni, of a tranquilled mind, and the chief of the ascetics. Thinking the place lovely and free from any obstacles, the Muni took his firm seat there and, collecting all his thoughts within himself, taking the vow of non-speaking and controlling his breath, became engaged in practicing *tapasyā*. Restraining his senses and foregoing eating and drinking, that Muni constantly meditated on Bhagavatī of the nature of *sat, cit* and *ānanda*, O King! While he was thus meditating, the anthill grew up round and covered his body and nice creepers covered it also all round. O King! A long interval passed away and it was covered over with ants; so much so that that intelligent Muni was covered entirely and looked like a heap of earth.

O King! Once the King Śaryāti wanted to play in an artificial wilderness and came there to the lake with his wives. Śaryāti became at once deeply engaged in playing on the clear waters of the lake, surrounded by the beautiful females. On the other hand, the quick beautiful daughter Sukanyā, picking up flowers here and there with her companions also began to play. Dressed in ornaments, Sukanyā walked to and fro; her anklets making a beautiful tinkling sound, until she came to the anthill of Cyavana Ṛṣi. She sportingly sat close to that anthill and instantly saw a shining substance inside through that, like fireflies. 'What is this?' She

thought and wishing to take it, took a thorn and became very eager to prick it up.

51-59. Slowly she went close to it and no sooner she got ready to prick it, than the Muni saw the beautiful, good-haired daughter as if to one's liking. The ascetic Bhārgava, seeing that auspicious nice lady with nice teeth, spoke out in a feeble voice: 'What are you doing? O thin-bellied one! I am an ascetic; better go away from here. You have got such big eyes, yet you do not see me. I therefore forbid you in this attempt; do not pierce the anthill with thorn.' Though prevented, the daughter could not hear his words and asking 'What was that?' pierced his two eyes with thorns. Thus impelled by Fate, the princess sportingly pierced his eyes; but she suspected and thought 'What have I done?' Thus becoming afraid she returned from that spot. His two eyes being pricked, the great Muni, exceedingly pained, became very wrathful and incessantly gave vent to sorrows and remorse, being restless with pain. At that instant it happened that the king, ministers, soldiers, elephants, horses, camels—all the beings that were there—had all their evacuations (passing their urines and faeces) stopped. Seeing thus happened all on a sudden, the King Śaryāti was very much pained and became very anxious. All the soldiers came to the King and informed him of the stoppage of their evacuations. The King thought over the cause why this had happened.

60-65. Cogitating thus, the King returned home. Becoming very much troubled with cares and anxieties, He asked his soldiers and kinsmen 'Who amongst you has done such a heinous act? On the west side of the lake the Mahārṣi Cyavana is practicing the great *tapasyā* in the midst of the forest; I think someone has done mischief to that king of ascetics, blazing like a fire; and therefore we are overcome with this disease. The high-souled aged son of Bhṛgu has become specially proficient in his asceticism and has become supreme; I think someone must have injured him. Though I do not know who is that mischievous person that has shown him contempt or like that, this our state at present clearly shows that this is the fit punishment of

that.’ Hearing this, the soldiers said: ‘None of us has committed any mischief by word, mind or body; we know this very well.’

Here ends the Second Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the piercing of the eyes of Cyavana Muni in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam the Mahā-Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas, Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter III—Bestowing the daughter of King Śaryāti

1-11. Vyāsa said: “O King! Thus the King, troubled with cares asked his soldiers in an angry mood. Next he asked his friends in sweet words. The princess, seeing his father and his soldiers sorrowful, thought of her piercing the two eyes of the Muni with a thorn and thus spoke to the King: ‘O Father! While sporting in that forest, I came to see a very hard anthill covered with creepers and shrubs wherein I found two holes, O King! Through those small openings, I saw the two shining things as if they were fireflies, and thinking them so, I pierced them with thorns. At this time a faint voice I heard coming from that anthill. “Oh! I am killed!” I then took out my thorns and found them wet with water. “What is this!” I asked myself and was thunderstruck with fear; but I could not know what I pierced in that anthill.’

Hearing these gentle words of his daughter, the King Śaryāti thought that that act had no doubt insulted the Muni and went at once to the anthill. He broke the anthill that covered the Muni and saw the suffering Cyavana aged in practicing *tapasyā*, very much in pain. The King prostrated flat before the Muni and then with folded hands, praised him with hymns and humbly said to him: ‘O intelligent one! My daughter has done this wrong act while sporting. Therefore O high-souled one! What she had done unknowingly, do you forgive out of your own high- hearted-ness and liberality. I have heard that the ascetics are always void of anger; therefore now you have to forgive this daughter of the offense and thus show your kindness.’

12-16. Vyāsa said: "The Mahārṣi Cyavana, hearing thus the King's words and specially seeing his humble and distressed nature, said: 'O King! I never was angry a bit; your daughter had pained me; yet I am not angry and have not cast on her any curse; you better see that I am innocent; much pain is felt by me due to my eyes being pricked. O King! It seems that you are sorry and troubled for that sin. Who can acquire happiness in this world who has committed a great offense to a *bhakta* of the Devī, even if he gets Śiva as his Protector. O King! On the one hand, I am now worn out by old age, and then on the other hand, I am deprived of my eyes; what shall be now my means? Please say, who will take care of the blind man?'

17. The King said: 'O Muni! The anger of the ascetics is transient; you are in practice of your *tapasyā;* so your anger is a thing of impossibility. So kindly forgive the offense of the daughter. I have got many persons who will incessantly take care of you.'

18-22. Cyavana said: 'O King! There is none of my relations with me; then I am now made blind; how shall I go on with my *tapasyā?* I do not think that your servants will take care of me. O King! If you think it your duty to please me, then do my word: give me your lotus-eyed daughter to serve me and take care of me. O King! I will be very glad if I acquire your daughter; she will serve me when I will be engaged in my *tapasyā*. O King! This, if observed, will satisfy me and all the troubles that are now with you and your army will no doubt disappear. O King! Think and grant me your daughter; I am an ascetic observing vows and if you give over your daughter to me, you will not incur any sin nor any fault.'

23-31. Vyāsa said: "O Bhārata! Hearing thus the Muni's words, the King Śaryāti was immersed in cares and could not say anything whether he would or would not give over his daughter to him. The King thought, 'My daughter is very fair like a Devakanyā and this Muni is aged, ugly and specially he is blind; how then can I be happy if I give over my daughter to him? Who is there so stupid and vicious that knowing what is good and bad, for his own selfish happiness wants to deprive his beautiful daughter of the enjoyments of her married life? How will that fair-eyebrowed

daughter of mine pass her days happily in the company of this aged Muni when she will be overpowered by passion? The more so when the young beautiful ladies are not able to conquer their passions though possessed of husbands of their own standard and liking, how then can my daughter conquer her passion on getting this old blind husband? The exquisitely beautiful Ahalyā married Gautama; but seeing the youthful beauty of that lovely lady, Indra deceived her and took away her chastity. Until at last, her husband Gautama finding that action contrary to *dharma*, cursed him. Now through the severe curse of that Brāhmaṇa many troubles may arise; but I cannot in any case give my daughter Sukanyā over to him.' Thus thinking and absent-minded the King went back to his home and, being very distressed, called his ministers to form a council. 'O Ministers! What am I to do now? Is it advisable to give over my daughter to the Muni? Or is it better to suffer these pains? Judge and say what is the best course for me.'

32. The Ministers said: 'O King! What shall we say in this critical juncture? How can you bestow your exceedingly beautiful daughter to that ugly unfortunate ascetic?'

33-45. Dvaipāyana said: "At this moment, seeing her father and ministers troubled very much with cares, Sukanyā understood at once everything by signs and hints; she then smilingly said to her dear father: 'O Father! Why are you looking so sad with cares? Perhaps you are very much troubled and sad for me. O Father! I have pained that Muni; so I will go and console him; what more than this that I will give up myself at his feet and please him.'

Hearing these words of Sukanyā, the King spoke to her very gladly before all the ministers. 'O daughter! Cyavana Muni is blind, aged and of a worn figure, especially of a very irritable temper; and you are a mere girl; how will you be able to serve him in that dreadful forest? You are like Rati in beauty and loveliness; how can I bestow my daughter to that aged worn out, blind Muni for my own pleasure? The father marries the daughter to him who has got relations, who is of a proper age, strong, who has got unequalled grains and wealth, gems and jewels; never to a man void of

wealth. O broad-eyed one! You are exquisitely handsome; and that ascetic is very old; see what an amount of difference lies between you two. The Muni, moreover, has past his marriageable age; so how can I give over my daughter. O lotus-eyed! You always dwell in beautiful places; how can I now make you dwell forever in thatched huts? O cuckoo-voiced one! Rather will I and my soldiers die than to bestow you to that blind husband. Let whatever come it may, I will never lose patience; therefore, O one of good hips! be quiet. I will never give you to that blind man. O my daughter! I don't care a straw whether my kingdom and my body live or die, but I will never be able to give you over to the ascetic.' Hearing thus the father's words, Sukanyā began to speak with a glad face the following sweet and gentle words:

46-48. 'O Father! Do not trouble yourself for nothing with cares on my account. Give me over now to that best of Munis; then all the persons will be happy, no doubt. I will derive my intense pleasure there in that dense forest by serving with intense devotion my old husband, who is very holy. I have got not the least inclination towards these worldly enjoyments which are the sources of all troubles for nothing, My heart is now quiet. Therefore, O Father! I will become a chaste wife to him and act according to his liking.'

49-54. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Ministers were greatly amazed on hearing these words, and the King also became greatly pleased and took her to the presence of the Muni. Going before him, he bowed down to the Muni and said: 'O Lord! Please accept duly this daughter for your *seva*.' Thus saying, the King betrothed his daughter to him according to rules. Cyavana Muni also became very glad to receive her. The Muni took the daughter willingly for his *seva* but refused other dowries that the King presented. Thus the Muni became pleased; immediately the soldiers began to evacuate and were very glad. Seeing this, the King's heart became filled with joy. When the King, thus finishing the betrothal ceremony of his daughter wanted to return home, the thin-bodied princess then told her father:

55-64. Sukanyā said: 'O Father! Take away all my ornaments and clothings and give me for my use an excellent deerskin and one bark. O Father! I will dress myself like the wives of Munis and serve my husband in such a way as will bring to you the unparallelled undying fame in Heaven, Earth and the nether regions; also I will serve my husband's feet so that I can derive the highest happiness in the next world. I am now full of youth, especially beautiful; do not think a bit that as I am wedded to an aged ascetic, that my character will be spoilt. As Vasiṣṭha's wife Arundhati has attained celebrity in this world, so I will also attain success; there is no doubt about this. As the chaste wife Anasūyā of Mahārṣi Artri has become widely known in this world, so will I be known also and establish your fame.'

The exceedingly religious King, hearing all these words of Sukanyā gave her deerskin and all other articles wanted. The King could not help weeping when he saw that his daughter had dressed herself like the daughter of a Muni. He stood fixed, very sad, on that very spot. All the queens were exceedingly filled with sorrow to see the daughter dressed in bark and deerskin. Their hearts quivered and they began to weep. O King! Then King Śaryāti bade good bye to the Muni, leaving there his daughter. He went with a grievous heart and returned to his own city, accompanied by the ministers."

Here ends the Third Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the bestowing of the daughter of the King Śaryāti to the Cyavana Muni in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the Mahā Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IV—Conversation between the Aśvins and Sukanyā

1-38. Vyāsa said: "O King! When the King Śaryāti departed, that virtuous lady devoted her time in serving her husband the sacred fire. She gave to the Muni for his food various delicious roots and fruits. She made him bathe with warm water; then making him put on the deerskin, she made him sit on the *kuśāsan*, a seat made of *kuśa* grass. Next she used to place

before him *kuśa*, *til* and *kāmaṇḍalū* and speak to him: 'O best of Munis! You are now to perform your *nitya-karma* (daily rites).'

When the *nitya-karma* was finished, the lady used to catch him by his hand make him sit on another seat. Next the princess brought fresh ripe fruits and cooked rice grown without cultivation, and gave to the Muni for his food. When the husband finished his meals, she gave him devotedly water for cleansing his mouth; then washing his hands and feet, gave him betel nuts and *pān* leaves. Next she made him sit on an excellent seat, and with his permission, performed her own bodily purifications. She then used to eat the remnants, fruits and roots of the dishes of her husband; and coming next to her husband addressed him affectionately 'O Lord! Order me, what can I do now for you? If you like, I may shampoo your legs and feet.' Thus every day that princess devotedly spent her time in serving her husband. At evening when the *homa* ceremony was finished, she collected delicious and soft fruits and presented them to him to eat. With his permission she then ate that were left of the fruits; next she prepared bedding soft to the touch and gladly made him sleep on it. When his dear husband thus laid himself on the bed, she shampooed his feet and legs and in the interval, asked him about the religious duties of the chaste wives of the family. When the Muni fell asleep in the night, she devotedly laid herself close to his feetand slept. During the summer season when her husband was perspiring, the lady used to fan him with cool breeze. She took off his troubles and thus served her husband. In the cold season, she collected firewood and lit them before him and used to ask him frequently 'O Muni! Are you feeling pleasure in this?' That lady, dear to her husband, used to get up from her bed in the *brahma-muhūrta* before sunrise, next made her husband get up and took him some short way off and there made him sit for calling of nature. She kept ready water and earth and stood in readiness at a suitable distance apart. Knowing that he had finished his calls of nature, she took him back to the *āśram*, washed his hands and feet with water duly, making him sit on a convenient *āsana*. She then gave to him the pot for *ācamana* and then began to collect fuel. She used to bring pure clear water and made it hot; then she asked her husband fondly 'O husband!

Have you finished cleaning your teeth? Warm water is ready; may I bring it to you? You better bathe with that, uttering your *mantrams*. The time is now for performing the morning *sandhyā* and for performing *homa*. Do the *homa* regularly and worship the Devas.' The princess, whose nature was pure and clean as anything, kept herself engaged daily in serving her husband, Cyavana Muni, with perfect gladness, austerity, and observing all the rules duly. Thus that beautiful-faced princess worshipped gladly Cyavana Muni, serving the sacred fire and the guests daily.

Then one day the Aśvin twins, the sons of Sūrya came sporting and at their pleasure, close to the hermitage of Cyavana Muni. At that time the princess, beautiful in all respects, was returning home after her bath in a pure clear stream and came to the sight of the two Aśvins. Being enchanted by her extraordinary lovely beauty, they thought she might be a Deva Kavyā, quickly went to her and fondly questioned her: 'O slow moving one like an elephant! Look! We are the sons of Devas; we have come to you to ask some questions. O excellent one! Wait for a moment; we request thus to you. O sweet-smiling one! Please answer our questions truly and properly. O lovely-eyed! Whose daughter are you? Who is your husband? Why have you come here alone to bathe in this tank? O lotus-eyed! You seem to be a second Lakṣmī; O beautiful One! We want to know something; please reply exactly. O beloved! Your feet are exceedingly gentle; why have you not put on any shoes; why are you walking barefoot? Our hearts are being troubled to see you walking thus barefoot! O thin-bodied one! Your body is very soft that you ought to have gone in a car; why are you thus walking on foot and in such an ordinary dress in this forest? Why have not hundreds of maidservants accompanied you? O lovely faced one! Speak truly whether you are a princess or Apsarā. O sinless one! Blessed is your mother from whom you are born, blessed is your father. Specially the person with whom you are married, we are unable to describe his fortune. O lovely-eyed! This earth is being sanctified by the movements of your feet; consequently this garden is now purer today than the Devaloka. Boundless is the fortune of these deer and birds who can see you whenever they like; what more can we say than this that this forest is rendered very pure. O fair one with fair

eyes! It is needless to praise your beauty; speak truly who is your father and who is your husband; we like very much to see them.'

39-56. Vyāsa said: "O King! On hearing their words, the exquisitely beautiful princess bespoke to the twin Devas with much bashfulness: 'I am the daughter of Śaryāti; father has given me over, under the directions of the Daiva, to the Mahārṣi Cyavana. I am his chaste dear wife; the Mahārṣi is staying in this very place. O twin Devas! My husband is a blind ascetic and he is very aged. I gladly serve him day and night according to the rules of chastity amongst women. Who are you? And why have you come here? My husband is staying in the *āśrama;* kindly come and sanctify the *āśrama*.'

O King! The two Aśvins heard her and said: 'O Auspicious One! Why has your father betrothed you, such a gem, to an old ascetic? It is very strange. Indeed! In this solitary forest you are shining like steady lightning; what more can we say than this, that we hardly find a beautiful lady like you, even in the Devaloka! Alas! The Deva dress and a full set of ornaments and blue dyes look well on you; this deerskin and barks of trees in no way fit you. O beautiful one! Your eyes are very large; yet the Creator has given you a blind husband; specially a very aged one; and you are wearing away by constantly dwelling with your blind husband in this forest. What more can be wrong for the Creator than this? O deer-eyed one! In vain you have selected him for your husband. At this period of your youth and beauty it does not look at all well to see you with your blind husband. You are versed in dancing and music; but your husband is blind and aged; when in dancing you will shoot your darts of love, on whom then, will those arrows fall? O large-eyed one! Oh! The Creator is certainly of a very little understanding! Else why would he have made you, so full of youthful vitality, the wife of a blind man? O lovely-eyed one! You are never fit for him; select another husband. O Lotus-eyed one! Your husband is not only blind but an ascetic; so your life is quite useless. We do not consider it fit that you reside in this forest and put on this bark and deerskin. O dark-eyed one! Your body and every limb thereof is very beautiful; judge well and make one amongst us your husband. O proud one! Why are you being

so very beautiful, spending your youth in vain in serving this Muni? No good signs are visible in this Muni; he cannot maintain nor protect you even; why are you, then, serving him in vain? O spotless one! Leave at once this Muni, quite incapable in giving any sort of pleasure, and marry one of us. O beloved! Then you will enjoy in the Nandana Kānana or in the forest of Chaitratarha. O proud one! How will you spend your time with your aged husband, being brought to so much humiliation and without any dignity and self-respect? You are endowed with all auspicious signs; moreover you are a princess; you are not ignorant of all enjoyments in this world; why then you like to live such an unfortunate life in vain in this forest? O princess! Your face is exceedingly beautiful; your eyes are wide and your waist is thin. Your voice is sweet like a cuckoo. Who is more beautiful than you? Quit now your aged ascetic husband marry one of us for your happiness; then you will be able to enjoy excellent celestial things in the heavens. O good-haired one! What pleasure can you derive by your staying in this forest with your blind husband? O deer-eyed one, it is very painful for you at this young age of yours, to remain in this forest and serve this aged man. O princess! Is it that you like troubles and nothing else? O one with a face lovely like the Moon! We see that you are of a very soft body; so to collect water and fruits is never a duty fit for you.'

Here ends the Fourth Chapter in the Seventh Skandha on the conversation between the two Aśvins and the Princess Sukanyā in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the Mahā-Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter V—Cyavana Muni Regains his Youth

1-6. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing their words, the princess began to tremble; but holding on patience she spoke to them in reserved terms thus: 'You are the sons of Sūrya and you are the acknowledged deities amongst the gods; specially you know everything, I am a chaste virtuous woman. You ought not to speak to me in the above mannner. O twin Devas! Father has betrothed me to the Muni practicing the *yoga-dharma;* besides I am chaste; how can I behave like a prostitute! This Sun is the witness of the

good or bad actions of all people; He is therefore looking on our actions also. Besides, you both are born in the family of the high-souled Kaśyapa. Thus it is utterly wrong for you to utter such irreligious and infamous words. You know well the course of *dharma*, what is religious and what is irreligious in this world, which has got nothing substantial; how can a family woman leave her husband serve another? Go wherever you like, O sinless Devas! I am the daughter Sukanyā of the King Śaryāti, devoted to my husband. Otherwise I will curse you.'

7-11. Vyāsa said: "O Bhārata! Hearing these words, the Aśvins were greatly surprised, and afraid of the Muni, spoke again: 'O princess! We are very much pleased to see your chastity; therefore, O beautiful woman! Ask boon from us; we will grant it for your welfare. O honored woman! We, the physicians of the gods, will certainly make your husband exceedingly beautiful and young, O intelligent one! When we three will be exactly the same in figure, age and luster, you better make one of us your husband.' Hearing their words Sukanyā became greatly amazed, went to her own husband spoke everything what they, the God's physicians, said.

12-17. Sukanyā said: 'O husband! The Aśvins, Sūrya's sons, have come close to our *āśrama*. I have seen the two Devas and their bright bodies. Seeing me beautiful they were overpowered with passion and told me, "We will, be sure, make your blind husband, young, bright and give him his two eyes again; but you will have to make one condition. Hear it: Your husband will be exactly like us and you will have to select your husband amongst three of us." O holy one! Hearing this as strange, I now come to inform you. Now judge and say what I am to do now. The Devas' Māyā is very difficult to comprehend; the more so, when I do not know their intentions! O omniscient one! I will act as you desire.'

18-19. Cyavana said: 'O beloved! Go just now, at my word, to the Aśvins and bring them, O auspicious one! before me. What more shall I say than this: go and observe what they say, as early as possible. There is no need to think over this matter.'

20-25. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus getting the permission from her husband, Sukanyā went immediately to them and said: 'O Aśvins! You are the chief gods; now do as you say. I agree to observe what you desire.' Hearing her words, the two Devas then went to the Muni's *āśrama* and told the princess: 'Let your husband enter in the midst of the water.' The aged Cyavana Muni went down quickly in the midst of waters to attain a good form. Next the two Aśvins entered into the water of that tank. A few minutes after, the three persons came out of the tank. All were equally bright, equally beautiful, equally young and their limbs were decorated equally with earrings and various other ornaments. They all spoke simultaneously: 'O Auspicious One! There is no other woman beautiful like you, especially your face is very clean and fair; therefore select any one of us three as your husband. O fair one! Whomever you love most, choose him.'

26-30. Vyāsa said: "O King! Sukanyā then saw their bodies are equally bright and beautiful; not the least difference is to be found in beauty, age, voice and dress. She became doubtful on seeing their equal appearances. The princess, not being able to distinguish her husband, became very anxious and thought: 'What am I to do now? Whom to choose? They are exactly the same. I cannot distinguish who is my real husband! This may be the magic set up by the two Aśvins. However, I am put to a great crisis. I won't ever select another who is not my husband. Therefore my death is well nigh; what to do now? The third form seen now may be also a Deva's son.' Thus cogitating, she resolved to meditate on the Highest Prakṛti, the Lady of the Universe, the Most Auspicious One. Then the thin-bellied princess began to sing the hymns of the Bhagavatī.

31-38. Sukanyā said: 'O World-Mother! Under most painful circumstances I take refuge unto Thee; preserve my chastity; I bow down to Thy feet. O Devī! Salutations to Thee, born of lotus. O Thou, the dear consort of Śaṅkara! Salutations to Thee. O Thou favorite to Viṣṇu, O Mother of the *Vedas!* O Sarasvatī! Salutations to Thee. Thou hast created the world, moving and unmoving; Thou art preserving it without being the least excited; again Thou art swallowing it for the peace and well-being of all.

What more, Thou art the Most Worshipable Mother of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa. Thou always illuminest the understanding of the illiterate and Thou always grantest liberation to the *jñāṇins*. Thou art the Prime Prakṛti in fullness and the Beloved of the Prime Puruṣa. Thou grantest *bhukti* (enjoyment) and *mukti* (freedom) to the souls who are cleansed and pure; Thou givest pain to those that are entirely void of knowledge, and Thou grantest happiness to those that are endowed with *sattva-guṇa*. O Mother! Thou bestowest *siddhi* (spiritual success, the eight supernatural powers), fame, and victory to the *yogīs!* Being merged in an ocean of bewilderment, I come now to take refuge unto Thee. O Mother! The two Devas are playing hypocrisy with me; thus puzzled I can't fix my mind whom to select; therefore I am merged in an ocean of sorrow. Save me by showing my real husband. O Omniscient One! Knowing my vow of chastity dost Thou enlighten me so that I can know my husband.'

39-58. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus pleased by the Sukanyā's prayers, the Devī Tripurā Sundarī then imparted to her the pleasant *sattva-jñāṇa,* the knowledge pertaining to *sattva-guṇa*. She then looked again at the three personages; and though they were similar in appearance and beauty, instantly she recognized mentally her husband chose him. When Sukanyā selected the Muni Cyavana, the two Devas became greatly pleased to see that. The two Devas were pleased by the grace of Bhāgavatī; they were further pleased to see the *dharma* of chastity and granted her the boon. They then bade goodbye to Cyavana and were ready to start to their own place, when Cyavana being very much pleased to get through their grace, his beauty, youth and wife, interrupted them, saying "O high-minded Devas! You have done much good to me. I used to feel pain every day, in spite of my having this wife having good hairs! But owing to your mercy, I cannot describe how happy I am now in this world of woes and troubles. I was very aged and blind and was without any enjoyment, but it is you that coming to this forest have brought to me eyes, youth and exquisite beauty. Therefore, O twin Devas! I desire to do something good to you in return. Fie on him, who does not return anything for the good that he has received from a beneficent friend. That man remains indebted forever in this world;

therefore I am desirous to give you two now whatever you want. O twin Devas! Even if the Devas or the Asuras find it difficult to attain, I will give that to you to free myself of the debt I owe to you. I am greatly pleased at your good deed; therefore be kind enough to speak out whatever you desire.'

They began to consult with each other, and spoke to the Muni Cyavana who was seated with Sukanyā beside him: "O Mahārṣi! We have got all our desires by the grace of Father! Still it is difficult for us to drink some libation along with the other Devas and we thirst after that very strongly. At the great sacrifice of Brahmā in the Golden Mountain Kanakāchala, Indra the King of the Devas ordered us not to drink Soma, as we were physicians. Therefore, O knower of *dharma!* O ascetic! You will certainly do us a great favor if you can make us drink the Soma juice; we would be very glad and have our desires satisfied.'

Thus hearing the words of the Aśvins, Mahārṣi Cyavana gladly spoke to them the following gentle words, 'O twin Devas! I was blind and aged; but now I am become a young and beautiful man, and it is by your grace that I have got back my wife. Therefore I speak this truly before you that at the great sacrifice of the lustrous King Śaryāti, I will gladly make you drink the Soma in the presence of Indra, the King of the Devas.' Hearing these words of the Muni, the twin Aśvins were greatly pleased and went back to the world of the Devas. And the Muni Cyavana, too, returned to his own *aśrama* with his wife Sukanyā.

Here ends the Fifth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the getting of youth by Cyavana Muni in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam the Mahā Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VI—the Aśvins drink the Soma juice

1-3. Janamejaya said: "O Muni! How did Mahārṣi Cyavana make these twin Devas drink Soma and how his words came out to be true? Human strength is insignificant compared to Indra's strength. Indra forbade the

physicians, the Aśvins, to drink the Soma juice. How then could the Muni give the right thereof? This is very wonderful. Therefore, O Thou, devoted to *dharma!* O Lord! Describe in detail the doings of this Mahārṣi Cyavana. I am very anxious to hear it."

4-10. Vyāsa said: "O King! In that famous sacrifice of the King Śaryāti, Cyavana Ṛṣi did wonderful feats. O Bhārata! I am now narrating to you his entirely wonderful character. Hear it attentively. Mahārṣi Cyavana, illustrious like the Devas, began to enjoy with a cheerful mind and gladdened heart, with his beautiful wife Sukanyā who was like a Deva Kanyā. Now, on one occasion, the wife of Śaryāti became very anxious and trembling said to her husband weeping: 'O King! You have betrothed your daughter to the blind Muni Cyavana; now it is your duty to go and enquire whether the daughter is living or is dead. O Lord! What is my beautiful daughter doing with that husband? Please go just now to the Muni's *āśrama* and see about it. O Rājarsi! I always burn in pain and agony when I think of her. She must have become very lean and thin due to the troubles of *tapasyā;* please bring her quickly here to my presence. She is suffering an everlasting pain from having an aged blind husband; and it is quite likely she has become very lean and thin. I am anxious, therefore, to see my daughter lean and thin who is wearing barks of trees as her dress.'

11. Śaryāti said: 'O broad-eyed One! I am going gladly just now to see my dear daughter and that Muni of severe vows.'

12-25. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus saying to his wife, distressed with sorrow, the King Śaryāti mounted on his chariot and quickly went towards the *āśrama* of the Cyavana Muni. On reaching there, he saw the Mahārṣi Cyavana like a Deva's son. Seeing his body like that of Deva, the King became bewildered and began to think thus: 'What? Has my daughter done such an ugly act, blameable in the society? That Muni was very calm and quiet, penniless and very old; perhaps my daughter, being overpowered with passion, killed him and has taken, no doubt, another husband. It is indeed difficult to control the God of Love, armed with his flowery bow: the period of youth is moreover very hard to conquer. So this

daughter impelled by lust has thrown a dreadful stigma on the clear name of the family of the great Manu. Fie on him whose daughter in this world is of a vicious character! It seems that daughters are born for the expiation of all the sins committed by their fathers. But what an unjust act have I committed for my own selfish ends? It is highly incumbent on every father to betroth his daughter with every care possible to a bridegroom suitable in every respect; but I did not do it and now have got the fruits equivalent to my doing. If I kill my daughter, vicious and unchaste, I will incur sin due to killing a woman and moreover my daughter. I am the cause of this stain on Muni's line of descent. On the one hand, the scandal on one is very powerful; and the affection for a daughter is strong on the other. What am I to do now?' The King became merged in deep thoughts. At this time Sukanyā accidentally saw her father thus drowned in anxious thoughts.

Seeing him, Sukanyā instantly came to her father's side and asked the King in sweet affectionate words. 'O King! How is it that your face has become so pale with anxious thoughts, seeing the Muni sitting in front of you, a young man with lotus eyes. O Father! What are you thinking? You belong to the famous Manu's family; besides, you are a high-minded man; you ought not to be sad so suddenly; come quickly and bow your head down before my husband.'

26. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the daughter's words, the King became impatient with anger and began to speak to her:

27-36. 'O Daughter! Where is that aged blind ascetic Muni Cyavana and who is this youth intoxicated with lust? A great doubt has arisen in my mind. O vicious soul! Have you slain that Cyavana Muni and engaged yourself in such a sinful act? O you, a disgrace to your family! Have you accepted another husband out of your desire of lust? My mind has became very much troubled on not seeing that Muni in this *āśrama*. O vicious one! Now I don't see the Muni; but instead of him, I see this bright person. And thus it is on account of your sinful behavior that my mind is drowned in the ocean of cares.'

Then hearing her father's words, Sukanyā smiled and gladly took him at once to her husband said: 'O Father! He is your son-in-law; He is the same Cyavana Muni; there is no doubt here. The twin Aśvins have given him this beautiful luster and lotus-like eyes. The two Aśvini Kumāras came accidentally to my *āśrama* and out of mercy no doubt, they have made Cyavana such a nice young man. O King! I am not that daughter who will do a vicious act as you think, beguiled by this beautiful form of the Muni. Father! Bow down before the Cyavana Muni. Ask him and he will tell you everything.' Hearing thus the daughter's words, the King went instantly to the Muni and bowed down before him and asked him affectionately thus:

37-38. The King said: 'O Son of Bhṛgu! How have you got your eyes back? Where has your old age gone? Kindly narrate all your details as early as possible. O Brāhmaṇa! Seeing your exquisitely beautiful form, a great doubt has arisen in me; so tell me everything in detail; I will be very glad, no doubt.'

39-45. Cyavana said: 'O King! The two Aśvins, the physicians of the Gods, came here on their own account and have done me this good out of their mercy. Owing to the benefit thus received, I have granted them the boon that I will make them drink the Soma juice in the Agṇistoma Yajña of the King Śaryāti. Thus I have got these beautiful eyes and the new youth; therefore, O King! Collect yourself and sit in the holy sacrificial seat.'

When the Brāhmaṇa Cyavana Muni spoke thus, the King Śaryāti and his dear wife sat with greatest pleasure and began to talk on auspicious topics with the high-souled Muni. Then the Bhārgava consoled the King and said, 'I will perform your sacrifice; please collect all the necessary materials. I have promised to the Aśvins that certainly I will make them drink the Soma juice. Therefore, O King! I will have to carry that out in your sacrifice. O King! If Indra be angry, I will stop him by my *tapas* force and in the Agṇistoma Yajña I will make the Aśvins drink Soma.'

46-58. Vyāsa said: "O King! Śaryāti, the lord of the earth, then gladly approved the proposals of Cyavana Muni. The King then showed respects

to the Muni and, with a pleasant attitude of mind, returned to his city with his wife, all the while talking of the Muni on the way. On a good auspicious day he, possessed of enormous wealth and prosperity prepared an excellent place for the performance of the sacrifice. The Muni Cyavana then invited Vasiṣṭha and other respectable Munis and initiated the King Śaryāti for the performance of the sacrifice. At the commencement of the sacrifice, Indra and the other Devas and the two Aśvins all came to the sacrifice to drink Soma. Seeing the Aśvins, Indra became afraid and asked the other Devas, 'Why have the Aśvins come here?' They are the physicians and, therefore, never fit to drink Soma. Who has brought them hither at this great Agṇistoma Sacrifice? The Devas remained all silent.

Cyavana Muni then became ready to offer Soma to the Aśvins and Indra immediately stopped him saying: 'They are already prohibited to drink Soma as a sacrificial share; so do not accept the vessel of Soma for them.' Cyavana then said: 'O Lord of Śachī! These are Sūrya's sons; tell then, truly why these are rendered unfit to drink Soma. They are not of mixed blood; they are born of the legal wife of Sūrya Deva. O Lord of the Devas! What is the fault then of the Aśvins, the physicians, that they be prohibited to drink Soma juice? Please reply. O Indra! This point must be settled by all the Devas here. I have promised to make them drink the Soma juice in this sacrifice. To keep my word I have initiated the King in this sacrifice. I will have my word fulfilled; there is no doubt about this. O Indra! They have given me my youth and bestowed my eyes and have done me great good. I will also do good to them to my best.'

59. Indra said: 'The Devas have appointed these Devas their physicians; therefore they are looked down upon in the society; so they are unfit to drink Soma. You need not make them drink Soma.'

60-61. Cyavana spoke: 'O Indra! You have adulterated yourself with Ahalyā; why are you, then, giving vent to your anger thus in vain? You have treacherously murdered Vṛtrāsura; it is quite inappropriate for a vicious person like you to say that the Aśvins cannot have the right to drink Soma. This is quite impossible.' O King! On the springing of this

dispute, nobody spoke for Indra. The illustrious Bhārgava, then, made them accept the Soma juice."

Here ends the Sixth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on granting the Aśvins the right to drink the Soma juice in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the Mahā-Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VII—the twin Aśvins drink the Soma

1-2. Vyāsa said: "O King! When the vessel filled with the Soma juice was given to the two Aśvins, Indra became very angry and showing his strength, spoke thus to the Muni Cyavana. 'O Brāhmaṇa! Never will you be able to endow him with such a high honor. When you have shown towards me your enmity, I will kill you, no doubt, exactly like Viśvarūpa.'

3-4. Cyavana said: 'O Indra! Do not insult the two high-souled Aśvins. They have given me beauty, youth and luster and made me look like a second Deva. O Lord of the Devas! Just as the other Devas can take the vessel of Soma excluding you, so the two powerful Aśvins can do the same towards you.'

5. Indra said: 'They are the physicians; so they cannot in any way have the right to accept the Soma cup. I will just now sever your head.'

6-29. Vyāsa said: "O Ornament to the race of Bhārata! At these words of Indra, the Muni made the Aśvins accept the Soma cup, thus highly insulting, as it were, to Indra and not taking any notice of his words. When the two Aśvins accepted the cup with a desire to drink the Soma thereof, the powerful Indra saw it and said: 'If you make them drink Soma out of your own necessity, I will hurl thunderbolt on your head exactly in the same way as I did towards Viśvarūpa.'

The Muni became violently angry at this and made the Aśvins drink the Soma according to due rites and ceremonies. Indra, too, angrily hurled thunderbolt on him in the presence of all the Devas. The weapon shed

luster like million Suns. Seeing the thunderbolt hurled on him, the powerful Muni made the Indra's thunderbolt stand stock still by virtue of his *tapas*. The powerful Muni then adopted black magic to kill Indra and offered oblations of clarified butter and grains, purified by *mantrams*, in the sacred fire. By the *tapas* of Cyavana, of unbounded luster, there sprang from the sacrificial hearth Kṛtyā, a female deity to whom sacrifices are offered for destructive and magical purposes. And out of Kṛtyā originated a very strong person, very cruel and of huge body, a great Demon. The horrible Demon named Mada, was terrifying to all beings. His body was huge like a mountain, teeth very sharp and terrible. Four teeth were hundred Yojanas long each, and his other teeth were ten Yojanas long. His arms were like mountains, very long and fierce; his tongue, horrible, rough and so very long that it reached up to the heavens. His throat was like a mountain peak, hard and of a furious appearance; nails resembled tiger's, hairs horrible. His body was jet black like lampblack; face very terrible, eyes bright like the conflagration fire, and awful. One of his jaws touched the ground and the other touched the heaven. Thus was born the Demon named Mada, of huge form. Looking at him, the Devas became suddenly frightened; Indra, too, got very much terrified at the sight of him and did not want to have any more fight. The Demon swallowed Indra's thunderbolt, looked at the sky, and stood up as if to swallow at once the whole Universe. He became infuriated with rage and pursued Indra to devour him.

Seeing this, the Devas cried aloud: 'Alas! We are slain.' Indra had his arms disabled by *mantrams* and so he could not hurl his thunderbolt, though he wanted to do so. The Lord of the Devas, then, with thunderbolt in his hand, looked on the Demon as Death personified and remembered his *guru*, skilled in the knowledge which is the proper time to perform a certain thing. The liberal-minded Bṛhaspati, knowing the time of imminent danger, and that he is remembered by Indra, at once came to the spot. He then judged what to do in the present crisis and told Indra: 'O Indra! This cannot be averted even by *mantrams;* what to speak of the thunderbolt! This powerful Asura Mada has arisen from the sacrificial hearth by virtue of the

tapas of Cyavana Muni. The Muni's power is especially felt here. O Lord of the Devas! Nobody—you, I, nor any other Deva—will be able to resist him. Know this. Even Brahmā cannot thwart the anger of one who is devoted to the Śakti, the Highest Force; Cyavana is the *bhakta* of the Highest Śakti. So no other person is able to defeat him. He is the man himself to take back the Kṛtyā that he has originated. There is no doubt about this. So it is better for you now to take the shelter of the Muni.'

30-52. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus from his *guru*, Indra went to the Muni and bowed down shuddering, before him. 'O Muni! Forgive me and stop the Asura from his intention to slay the Devas. O all-knowing one! Be pleased, I will keep your words. O Bhārgava! The two Aśvins will from this day have the right to drink the Soma juice. This I speak out to you in truth. O Brāhmaṇa! Be graciously pleased unto me. O Ascetic! Your intention will never be baffled. Especially I know you to be a knower of *dharma;* so, you will never be able to make your word swerve from truth. The two Aśvins will, by your grace, be able to drink always the Soma cup; and the King Śaryāti's fame will also know no bounds. O Muni! Know that what I have done is simply to test your prowess in *tapas*. O Brāhmaṇa! Now do this favor to me and take back this Demon Mada, sprung from your sacrificial hearth and thus do good to all the Devas. There is no doubt about this.'

Thus spoken piteously by Indra, Cyavana, who knew the Highest Reality, drew back within himself the anger arising from the enmity with Indra. Then the Mahārṣi Cyavana consoled the Devas that were very much perplexed and anxious out of terror of the Demon named Mada, and divided the Asura into four parts: female sex, drinking, gambling and hunting animals. When Mada was thus divided into four parts, the terror-stricken Devas felt themselves relieved and saved and got consoled. Cyavana then placed the Devas in their respective stations and completed the sacrifice. As last, the religious Bhārgava made first Indra and then the two Aśvins drink the Soma Cups. O King! Thus Cyavana had the Aśvins their Soma Cups by virtue of his power of *tapas*. Thence the tank with the sacrificial post *yūpa* became famous, and the Muni's *āśrama* also was

renowned and honored in all respects. The King Śaryāti, too, became very glad at this sacrifice and completing the sacrifice returned with his ministers to his city.

Manu's son, the powerful religious King Śaryāti governed his kingdom, free from any obstacles or other enemies. He had one son named Ānarta; and Ānarta had a son named Revata born to him. Revata built the city of Kuśasthalī in the midst of the ocean and began to live there. He enjoyed all the things in the countries named Ānarta and others. Revata had one hundred sons of whom Kakudmi was the eldest and of pure character. He had one daughter very beautiful named Revatī, endowed with all auspicious qualities. When the daughter reached a marriageable age, the King began to think where he could get a prince of a good noble family. That powerful King began to govern his people Ānartas, with his headquarters at the Raivata hill. 'To whom to betroth this daughter?' the King thought, and settled that he would go to Brahmā and ask him, the venerable omniscient Prajāpati, worshipped by the Devas. Thus the King went with his daughter Revatī to the Brahmaloka. There the Devas, Yajñas, *Vedas,* mountains, oceans and rivers all were shining with luminous bodies. There the eternal Ṛṣis, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Pannagas and Cāranas were singing hymns to Brahmā, standing with folded hands."

Here ends the Seventh Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the twin Aśvins drinking the Soma Cup in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the Mahā Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VIII—King Revata goes to Brahmaloka

1-5. Janamejaya said: "O Brāhmaṇaā! The King was a Kṣatriya; how could he go himself with his daughter Revatī to the Brahmaloka (the abode of Brahmā)? I entertain a great doubt on this point. I heard of yore while conversing about matters connected with the Brāhmaṇas, that the Brāhmaṇa only who was self-restrained and the knower of Brahman could alone go to the Brahmaloka. Satyaloka is very hard for the worldly people

to go; so I doubt how the king could have gone with Revatī from the Bhūrloka to the Satyaloka. Man, when he discards his body, can go to the Heavens. So is recited in all the *śāstras*. How then can people, while in their human bodies can to Brahmaloka? So cut asunder my doubts how the King Revata could go to the Brahmaloka to ask the Prajāpati on certain matters."

6-16. Vyāsa said: "O King! On the top of the mountain Sumeru, are located the Indra's heavens called Amarāvati (the abode of the Immortals) the Samyamanī city of Yama, Satyaloka, Vahniloka, Kailāsa, Vaikuṇṭha the abode of Viṣṇu and others. The great archer Arjuna, the son of Pṛthā, went to the Indraloka and spent five years there. In ancient times, King Kakutstha and others went to Indraloka in their human bodies. Even the powerful Daityas used to conquer the Indraloka and reside there at their will and pleasure. In ancient times, when the sovereign of the earth King Mahābhisa went to Brahmaloka, the most beautiful Gaṅgā also was coming to the Brahmaloka. On the way the King saw Her. O King! Accidentally at that time her clothings were cast aside by the wind; the King saw her partly in her naked state, and, overpowered with lust, smiled; Gaṅgā also smiled. Seeing their state, Brahmā instantly cursed them; and they had to come into this world and take birth. All the Devas, when oppressed by the Dānavas, went to Vaikuṇṭha and sang hymns to Hari, the Lord of Kāmalā.

O King! Men can go to all the *lokas;* in fact those high-souled men that perform *yajñas* or severe asceticism and thus have acquired great merits, those performers of sacrifices and ascetics surely go to the Heavens. O King! It is only the abundance of good merits that is the cause of going to Heavens. So you ought not to entertain any doubts on this."

17-18. Janamejaya said: "O Muni! King Revata went with his daughter Revatī to Brahmaloka; but what did he do when he went there? What did Brahmā order him? And to whom did the King betroth his daughter, when ordered by Brahmā? O Brāhmaṇa! Speak out all these in details to me now."

19-21. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hear. When the King went to Brahmaloka to ask about the proper bridegroom of his daughter, there was going on singing and music; so he waited a while to find an opportunity when the assembly would have a leisure; but he was so very pleased with music that he could not desist from hearing it until the end. When the music was finished, the King bowed down to Brahmā, showed him his daughter and informed Him of his intention."

22-26. The King said: 'O Deva! This good daughter is mine; now kindly say who will be her bridegroom. O Brahmā! To whom shall I betroth this daughter? I have come to you to ask on this point I have searched for many princes and seen also a good many of them; none of them is to my liking and so my mind is not at rest. O Lord of the Devas! Therefore I have come to you. Kindly select one bridegroom for her. He is to be a *kulīn* of good family, powerful, religious, liberal and a prince endowed with all auspicious qualities. This is my prayer.'

Vyāsa said: "O King! Brahmā, the lotus-born, the Creator of the world, hearing these words, laughed, thinking that a very long interval had passed away. He then said:

27-43. 'O King! The princes that you thought would become the bridegroom of your daughter all died; their sons and grandsons and their friends even have all passed away. The twenty-seventh *manvantara* of the Dvāpara-yuga is now going on; so none of the princes of your family are now existing. The Daityas sacked your city. Now Ugrasena, the King of Mathurā, is reigning in that place. He belongs to the illustrious lunar family of Yayāti. His son, the powerful Kaṁsa, born of a Dānava, began to do injuries always to the Devas; he threw his own father to the prison. Becoming very haughty, he began to govern himself the countries of other kings and began to tyrranise over the subjects. O King, the Earth became so much troubled by the armies of the wicked Demon Kings, that She became quite unable to bear further loads. So She went to seek refuge to Brahmā. Brahmā and the other Devas then began to say: "O Earth! To remove your burden the lotus-eyed Nārāyaṇā will incarnate Himself as part incarnation

in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He who is Nārāyaṇā practiced in ancient times, as the son of Dharma, a very severe asceticism, in company with his brother Nara in the sacred hermitage of Badarī. Now this very Deva is born in the great family of Yadu in the womb of Devakī by Vasudeva and is now celebrated by the name of Vāsudeva. O King! He has slain that vicious wicked Kaṁsa and has installed Ugrasena in his place. The very powerful Jarāsandha, the vicious King of Magadha, is the father-in-law of Kaṁsa. On hearing the death of his son-in-law, he became infuriated with rage, came to Mathurā and raged a terrible war. Vāsudeva defeated in a battle that Jarāsandha, proud of his mighty valor. Though defeated, Jarāsandha sent Kālayavana with his host of army to fight again with Kṛṣṇa. Bhāgavan Vāsudeva, when he heard that the King of Yavanas arrived, sent away all the members of his family and the Yādavas to Dvārkā and began to wait with his brother Balarāma for the Yavana King. Then he went alone to the camp of Yavana and led him away to a mountain cave where was sleeping the King Muchukuṇḍa and had then the Yavana King slain by Muchukuṇḍa. Kṛṣṇa then went to Dvārkā. The city of Dvārkā was then a dilapidated condition. Kṛṣṇa brought together the artists and got built exquisitely the beautiful palaces, forts, and markets and stalls, etc., and so added to the beauty of the place. That Vāsudeva, of mighty prowess, thus improving the city, made Ugrasena the King of that place; and Kṛṣṇa is now waiting there with his friends. His elder brother Baladeva, the carrier of the plough, is celebrated. Thus he with Musala in his hands is a great warrior and the part incarnation of Ananta Deva. He is the fit bridegroom of your daughter. So give your daughter in marriage, without any delay, according to the rules of the marriage ceremony to Saṅkarṣaṇa Balabhadra. After giving your daughter in marriage, go to the hermitage of Badarī and practice *tapasyā*. That sacred retreat is the recreation ground of the Devas, holy and yielding to human beings the objects of their desires.'

44-46. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus ordered by the lotus-born Brahmā, the King went to Dvārkā with his daughter. Reaching there he gave over his all-auspicious daughter in marriage to Baladeva duly according to the rules and regulations. At last, according to Brahmā's injunction, he became

engaged in severe austerities in the Badarīkāśram and, when the time of death arrived, left off his mortal coil on the banks of the river and went to the world of Gods."

47-48. Janamejaya said: "O Bhagavān! You have uttered one wonderful thing. 108 *yugas* passed away when the King of Revata with his daughter were deeply absorbed in hearing music in the Brahmaloka, yet neither the good King nor the daughter got sufficiently old. How could this be? How could they have lived so long? Were their longevities ordained to be such a long period?"

49-56. Vyāsa said: "O King! Brahmaloka is not touched by any vice nor sin; old age, hunger, thirst or fear of death exist there; nor is there any other cause by which weariness comes. So what doubt there can be that the people there will be long-lived, free from old age and death! When the King Śaryāti went up to the Heavens, his sons were all destroyed by the Rākṣasas; those that remained, terrified they left Kuśasthalī and fled on all sides. Vaivasvata Manu sneezed; owing to that, came out of his nose one powerful son; his name was Ikṣvāku. He spread the Solar dynasty and became celebrated. Getting excellent initiation from the Mahārṣi Nārada, he began to meditate on the Devī constantly and practiced severe *tapasyā* for the spread of his race. O King! Ikṣvāku had one hundred sons; Vikuksi was the eldest; he was powerful and endowed with great strength. Ikṣvāku became king and lived in Ayodhyā. He sent his fifty sons, the powerful Śakuni and others to Uttarāpatha (Eastern) provinces for governing those countries. That high-souled monarch sent also other eight sons to govern the countries in the South. O King! He kept the remaining two sons by his side for his own service."

Here ends the Eighth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the story of the King Revata and the spread of the Solar dynasty in the Mahāpuranam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IX—Kākutstha and the Origin of Māndhātā

1-11. Vyāsa said: "O King! Once on a time, the time for Aṣṭaka *śrāddha,* the funeral ceremony in honor of the departed arrived. Seeing this, the King Ikṣvāku ordered his son Vikuksi: 'O Child! Go immediately to the forest and bring carefully pure sanctified meat for the *śrāddha* purposes; see that there be no neglect of duty.' Thus ordered, Vikuksi instantly went to the forest equipped with arms. He hunted in the forest lots of boars, pigs, deer and hare. But he was so very tired with his journey in the forest and got so hungry that he forgot everything about the Aṣṭaka *śrāddha* and ate one hare there in the forest. The remaining excellent meat he brought and handed over to his father. When that meat was brought to be sprinkled for purification, the family priest Vasiṣṭha, on seeing it, at once came to know that some portion had already been eaten and it was the remaining part. The leavings of food are not fit for the sprinkling purposes; this is the *śāstrik* rule. Vasiṣṭha informed the King of this defect in the food. In accordance with the *guru's* advice, the King coming to know thus the violation of the rule by his son, became very angry and banished his son from his kingdom. The prince became known from that time as Śaśāda; he did not become the least sorry for his father's anger; he went to the forest and gladly remained there. He gladly passed his time absorbed in religion and sustained his life on forest fruits and roots. After some time when his father died, he inherited his kingdom. On becoming the King of Ayodhyā, Śaśāda had only one son; he became famous in the three lokas by the name of Kakutstha. He was known also by other names Indravāha and Purañjaya."

12. Janamejaya said: "O Holy One! How and why was the prince named Kakutstha? Why was he known by the two other names? Speak all this to me."

13-14. Vyāsa said: "O King! When Śaśāda went to the Heavens Kakutstha became king. That religious king then began to govern the country of his father and grandfather with an authority supported by a powerful army. At

this time the Devas suffered a defeat from the Dānavas and took refuge to Viṣṇu, the Infallible and the Lord of the three worlds. The eternal great Viṣṇu, full of intelligence and bliss then addressed the Devas.

15-16. Viṣṇu said: 'O Devas! Go and pray to the King Śaśāda. He will be your ally and kill all the Demons. That King is religious; especially he is a worshipper of the Highest Śakti. He is a good archer and will come to help you. His strength is immense.'

17-18. Vyāsa said: "O King! Indra and the other Devas hearing the nectar like words of Hari went to Ayodhyā, to Kakutstha, the son of Śaśāda. Seeing the Devas at his palace, the king worshipped them duly and with great care and he asked them why they had come there.

19-20. The King said: 'O Devas! When you have favored me by your presence here, I am blessed and sanctified; my life is crowned with success. Say what I can do for you; I will carry it out even if it be very hard for me to perform.'

21-22. The Devas said: 'O Prince! Please help and form an alliance with Indra to defeat the Daityas, invincible by the Devas. O King! By the grace of the Highest Śakti, you have nothing unattained anywhere; so we have come to you by the order of Viṣṇu.'

23-41. The King said: 'O Devas! I can back you and become your ally if Indra carries me on his back in the time of war. I will fight now with the Daityas for the Devas; but I will go to the battlefield on Indra's back; this I speak to you truly.'

Vyāsa said: "O King! The Devas then spoke to Indra: 'O Lord of Śachi! It is now your bounden duty to do this; so quitting shame, be a carrier to this King.' Indra got very much ashamed, but being requested frequently by Hari, at last assumed the appearance of a bull like the great Bull of Śiva. The King mounted on that bull to go to the war; he fought while taking his seat on the hump on the shoulders of the bull (Kakud); therefore he was named Kakutstha. The King was carried by Indra on his back hence he was

named Indravāha; he conquered the Dānavas in battle; hence he was called Purañjaya. The powerful King defeated the Dānavas and gave away all their wealth to the Devas. He bade farewell to the Devas and returned to his own kingdom. Thus the alliance was formed with Indra. O King! Kakutstha became very celebrated on this earth; his descendants became kings and were known as Kakutsthas and were all very famous here on this Earth. Kakutstha had one powerful son, named Kākutstha by his legal wife; Kākutstha had the son Pṛthu, of mighty prowess. Pṛthu was the part incarnation personified of Viṣṇu, and worshipper of the feet of the Supreme Śakti. His son was Visvarandhi; he became king and governed the kingdom. His son was Chandra; he came to be king, governed his subjects and multiplied very much his issues. Yuvanāśva was one of his sons; he was very powerful and spirited. Śavanta was the son of Yuvanāśva; he was very religious. He built a nice city named Śāvantī like the Paradise of Indra. Bṛhadaśva was the son of the high-souled Śāvanta; he had a son Kuvalayāśva. He became the Lord of the earth by the power of his arms. He killed Dhundu Dānava; so he was very much celebrated by the name of Dhundumāra. His son was Dridhāśva; he governed the earth; His son was Śrīṁān Haryaśva. His son was Nikumbha; he became the King. Nikumbha had his son Varhanāśva. Kriśāśva was his son. His son was the powerful Parasenajit; his son's prowess knew no bounds. Parasenajit had the fortunate son Yauvanāśva. O fortunate one! The son of Yauvanaśva was Śrīṁān Māndhātā; he became the Lord of the Earth and for the satisfaction of the Devī Bhagavatī had one thousand eight palaces built in Benares and in the other chief places of pilgrimages. Māudhātā was not born of his mother's womb but was born in the belly of his father. Then the ministers tore asunder the belly of his father and got him out."

42-43. Janamejaya said: "O fortunate one! What you said was never seen nor heard ever before since. This sort of birth is highly improbable. How was that beautiful son born in the belly of his father? Describe this in detail and satisfy my curiosity."

44-49. Vyāsa said: "O King! The King Yauvanāśva had one hundred queens; yet he had no issues. The King always thought much about his son. Once the King, sorry and desirous of a son, went to the holy retreats of the Ṛṣis. On arriving there, he began frequently to respire heavily before the ascetics. The Ṛṣis became filled with pity on seeing his sorrowful condition. O King! The Brāhmaṇas then said to him: 'O King! Why are you thus sorrowful and distressed? What is your sorrow that is troubling your heart? Speak truly. We will surely redress your grievance.'

50-54. Yauvanāśva said: 'O Munis! I have got the kingdom, wealth, excellent horses and one hundred illustrious chaste wives. I have no enemies in the three worlds; no one is stronger than me. All the Kings and ministers are obedient to my call. But, O ascetics! I have no son; this my sonless state is the only cause of my pain and sorrow. It has marred all my happiness. See! The persons that have no son cannot in any way go to Heavens. Therefore I am always being pained for this. You all are ascetics; you have taken great pains to learn the essence of the *Veda śāstras*. So kindly order me what sacrifice is fit for me to have a son. O ascetics! If you feel any pity for me, kindly perform this good work for me.'

55-65. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing the words of the King they were all filled with pity; and with fulness of mind, made him perform the sacrifice whose presiding deity was Indra. For the sake of the King, that he may get a son born to him, they had a jar filled with water by the Brāhmaṇas, and purified and charged that jar with the Vedic *mantrams*. The King got thirsty in the night and entered the sacrificial ground; seeing the Brāhmaṇas asleep, the King himself drank that water, surcharged with the *mantram*. The Brāhmaṇas consecrated and kept that water apart, according to due rules, surcharging with *mantrams*, for the wife of the King; but the King, getting thirsty, himself drank that water unconsciously. Next morning the Brāhmaṇas seeing the jar of water empty, were startled very much with fear; the Brāhmaṇas then asked the King: 'Who drank the water?' When they came to know that the King himself drank the water, the Munis thought this to he an act of Daiva (Fate) and completing the sacrifice

returned to their abodes. Then the King became pregnant by the power of the sacrificial *mantrams.* After some time the son became fully developed. Then the King's ministers, cutting his right bowel, got the son out. Out of God's favor, the King did not die. When the ministers were troubled with the thought whose milk the child will suck, then Indra spoke out the child would drink (*mān-dhātā*) my forefinger and gave his finger into the child's mouth. For that reason his name was Māndhātā. Thus I have described in detail the origin of Māndhātā."

Here ends the Ninth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the story of Kakutstha and the origin of Māndhātā in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam the Mahā-Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter X—the Story of Satyavrata

1-11. Vyasa said: "O King! That King Māndhātā, true to his promise, conquered one after another the whole world and became the paramount sovereign of all the other emperors and got the title Sārvabhauma: sovereign of all the earth. O King! What more to speak of Māndhātā's influence at that time than this that the robbers, struck with terror, all fled to the mountain caves. For this reason, Indra gave him the title Trasadasyu. He married Bindumatī, the daughter of Śaśavindu. Her limbs were proportioned and perfect and so she was very beautiful. Māndhātā had by that wife two sons: the famous Purukutstha and Muchukuṇḍa. Purukutstha had his son Anaranya; this prince was celebrated by the name of Bṛhadaśva. He was very religious and deeply devoted to his father. His son was Haryaśva; he was religious and knew the Highest Reality. His son was Tridhanvā; his son was Aruna. Aruna's son was Satyavrata; he was very avaricious, lustful, wicked and wilful. Once on an occasion that vicious prince, overpowered by lust, stole away the wife of one Brāhmaṇa and so created a hindrance in his marriage. O King! The Brāhmaṇas, united in a body, came to King Aruna, bewailing and lamenting and uttered repeatedly: 'Alas! We are ruined!' The King addressed to the grieved

subjects, the Brāhmaṇas: 'O Brāhmaṇas! What harm has been done to you by my son?'

Hearing thus the good words of the King, the Dvijas, versed in the *Vedas*, repeatedly blessed him and said: O King! You are the foremost of the powerful. So your son is like you. Today he has forcibly stolen away during the marriage ceremony a Brāhmaṇa daughter already given over in marriage.'

12-36. Vyasa said: "O King! The highly religious King hearing the words of the Brāhmaṇas, took them to be true and said to his son: 'O one of evil understanding! You have rendered today your name useless by perpetrating this evil act. O vicious one! Get away from my house! O sinner! You will never be able to live in my territory!' Seeing his father angry, Satyavrata repeatedly said: 'Father! Where shall I go?' He said: 'Live with the Chāndalas. You have stolen a Brāhmaṇa's wife and so have acted like a Chāndala. Go and live with them happily. O disgrace to your family! I don't like to get issues through you: you have obliterated this family's name. So, O sinner! go wherever you like.'

Hearing the words from his angry father, Satyavrata instantly quit the house and went to the Chāndalas. The prince, wearing his coat of armor and holding bows and arrows, began to spend away his time with the Chāndalas; but he could not get out of his breast his feeling of sympathy and mercy. When he was banished by his liberal minded angry father, the *guru* Vasiṣṭha instigated the King to the above purpose. Satyavrata was therefore angry with Vasiṣṭha, inasmuch as he, versed the *dharma-śāstras*, did not dissuade the father from banishing his son. His father then, owing to some inexplicable cause, quit the city and for the sake of his son, went to the forest to practice austerities.

O King! Owing to that sinful act, Indra did not rain at all in his kingdom for twelve years. O King! Just then Viśvāmitra, too, keeping his wife and children in that kingdom, began to practice severe austerities on the banks of the river Kauśikī. The beautiful wife of Kuśika then fell into great trouble

how she could maintain the family. All the children, pained with hunger, began to cry, begging for Nibār rice food. The chaste wife of Kauśika became very much troubled seeing all this. She thought, seeing the children hungry, 'Where am I to go now, from whom to beg, and what to do, inasmuch as the King was not then staying in the Kingdom. The husband is not also near; so who would protect my children? The boys are incessantly crying. Fie therefore to my life!'

She also thought thus: 'My husband left me in this penniless state; we are suffering for want of money. He does not know these, though he is quite able. Save my husband, who else will support my sons? They will all die now of starvation. I might sell one of my sons, whatever I get out of that, I can support the others; this is now my highest duty. I ought not to do otherwise and kill all my children; so I will now sell one of my sons to support the others.' Thus hardening her mind, she went out, tying the child by a rope round his neck. The Muni's wife, for the sake of the other children, fastened the middle son by a cord and got out of her house. The prince Satyavrata saw her distressed with pain and sorrow and asked: 'O beautiful one! What are you now going to do? Who are you? This boy is crying; Why have you tied him by a rope round his neck? O fair one! Speak out truly to me the cause of all this.'

37-38. The wife said: 'O Prince! I am the wife of Viśvāmitra. These are my sons. I am now going, for want of food, to sell one of these out of my own accord. O King! My husband has gone away to practice *tapasyā;* I do not know where he has gone. There is no food in the house; so I will sell one to support the other sons.'

39-56. Satyavrata said: "O chaste one! Save your children. I will bring to you your articles of food from the forest until your husband comes here. Daily I will fasten some food on a tree close by your *āśrama.* This I speak truly.' The wife of Viśvāmitra, hearing these words of the prince, freed the child of the fastening and took him to her *āśrama*. The child was named Gālaba, due to his being fastened by the neck. He became a great Ṛṣi afterwards. Viśvāmitra's wife then felt great pleasure in her home,

surrounded by her children. Filled with regard and mercy, Satyavrata duly performed his task and provided daily the family of Viśvāmitra with their food. He used to hunt wild boars, deer, buffaloes, etc., and used to take their flesh to the place where used to dwell the wife of Viśvāmitra and the children, and tie that up to an adjoining tree. The Ṛṣi's wife used to give those to her children. Thus getting excellent food, she felt very happy.

Now when the King Aruna went for *tapasyā* to the forest, the Muni Vasiṣṭha carefully guarded the Ayodhyā city, and the palace and the household. Satyavrata, too, used to sustain his livelihood daily by hunting, according to his father's order; and abiding by *dharma*, lived in the forest outside the city. Satyavrata cherished always in his heart, for some cause, a feeling of anger towards Vasiṣṭha. When his father banished his religious son, Vasiṣṭha did not prevent his father. This is the cause of Satyavrata's anger. Marriage does not become valid until seven footsteps are trodden; so the stealing away of a girl within that period is not equivalent to stealing away a Brāhmaṇa's wife. The virtuous Vasiṣṭha knew that; yet he did not prevent the King. One day the prince did not find anything for hunting; he saw in the forest the cow of Vasiṣṭha giving milk. Very much distressed by hunger, the King killed the cow like a dacoit, partly out of anger and partly out of delusion. He fastened part of the flesh to that tree for the wife of Viśvāmitra and the remainder he ate himself.

O one of good vows! The Viśvāmitra's wife did not know that to be beef and thought it to be deer meat, and so fed her sons with that. Now when Vasiṣṭha came to know that his cow had been killed, he was inflamed with anger and spoke to Satyavrata 'O Vicious One! What a heinous crime have you committed, like a Piśācha, by killing the cow! For the killing of the cow, the stealing of a Brāhmaṇa's wife and the fiery anger of your father, for these three crimes, let there come out on your head three *śankus* or marks of leprosy as the signs for your crimes. From this day you will be widely known by the name of Triśaṅku and you will show your Piśācha form to all the beings.'

57. Vyāsa said: "O King! The prince Satyavrata thus cursed by Vasiṣṭha remained in that retreat and practiced severe *tapasyā*.

58. But he got from a Muni's son the excellent *mantram* of the Highest auspicious Devī Bhagavatī, and became merged in the contemplation of that."

Here ends the Tenth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the story of Satyavrata in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XI—the Story of Triśaṅku

1. Janamejaya said: "O Intelligent One! Did the prince Triśaṅku free himself afterwards of the curse inflicted on him by the Muni Vasiṣṭha?"

2-8. Vyāsa said: "O King! Satyavrata, cursed by Vasiṣṭha, was transformed into the demoniacal state of *piśāchatva;* but he became a great devotee of the Devī and passed away his time in that *āśrama*. One day he repeating slowly the nine-lettered *mantram* of the Bhagavatī, wished to perform the Puraścharana ceremony, repeating the name of a deity attended with burnt offerings, oblations, etc. of the said *mantra*, came to the Brāhmaṇas, bowed down to them with great devotion and purity and said: 'O venerable gods of the earth! Kindly hear me; I with my head bowed down pray to you, that you all be my priests (*ṛitviks*). You are all versed in the *Vedas;* so kindly do for me duly the *homa* ceremony equal to one-tenth part of *japam*, for my success. O Brāhmaṇas! My name is Satyavrata; I am a prince; you ought to do this work for me for my welfare.'

Thus hearing the prince's words the Brāhmaṇas said: 'O prince! You are cursed by your *guru* and you are now turned into a demoniacal state. You have now no right to the *Vedas;* especially you are now in the *piśācha* state blamed by all persons; so now you are not fit to be initiated into the ceremony.'

9-14. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing them, the prince got very sad and dejected and thought 'Fie on my life! What shall I do now in living even in the forest? My father has forsaken me; I am banished from the kingdom; again, by the *guru's* curse, I have got this *piśācha* state; I therefore can't decide what to do.' The prince, then, collecting fuel, prepared the funeral pyre for himself, remembered Caṇḍikā Devī and repeating Her *mantram*, resolved to jump into the fire. Lighting the pyre in front, the prince bathed and standing with clasped palms, began to chant the hymns to Mahā-Māyā before entering into the fire. At this moment, the Devī Bhagavatī, knowing that the prince was ready to burn himself, came instantly to the spot on the back of the Lion by the aerial route. She maṇifested Herself before him and spoke in a voice deep like a rain-cloud.

15-17. 'O virtuous one, what is all this? Why have you settled all these? Never throw yourself in fire; be patient. O fortunate one! Your father is now aged; he will give you his kingdom and will go to the forest for *tapasyā;* therefore, O hero! Do leave your depression of spirits. O King! Tomorrow the ministers of your father will came to you to take you there. By My Grace, your father will install you on the throne and, in due time, he will conquer his desires and will go undoubtedly to the Brahmaloka.'

18-32. Vyāsa said: "O fortunate one! Thus saying, the Devī vanished from that spot; the prince desisted from his purpose of entering into the fire. In the meanwhile, the high-souled Nārada went to Ayodhyā and at once informed everything to the King. The King became very sad and began to repent very much, hearing the son's resolve to burn himself. The virtuous King, grieved at heart for his son, said to his ministers: 'You all are aware of the turning out of my son. I have forsaken my intelligent son Satyavrata; though he was very spiritual and worthy to get the kingdom; yet at my command, he instantaneously went away to the forest. Devoid of wealth, practicing forgiveness, he passed his time in study, particularly in spiritual knowledge; but Vasiṣṭha Deva, cursed him and made him like a *piśācha*. Very much distressed by pain and sorow, he was ready to burn himself but the Mahā Devī preventing him, he desisted from this purpose. So go

hurriedly and, consoling my powerful eldest son, bring him at once to me. I am now calm and quiet and of a retiring disposition; so I am determined to practice *tapasyā*. My son is now capable to govern the subjects; I will now install my son on the throne and retire to the forest.'

So he gladly sent his ministers to his son. The ministers, too, gladly went there and consoled the prince and with respect, brought him to Ayodhyā city. Seeing Satyavrata with matted hair on his head, with dirty clothes, thin and worn out with cares, the King began to think within himself 'Oh! What a cruel act have I done, though I know everything about religion, in banishing my intelligent son, quite fit to govern my kingdom.' Thus thinking, he embraced his son with his arms and consoling him, made him sit by his throne. The King, versed in politics, then began to speak gladly with suffocated feelings of love to his son sitting by the side of him.

33-53. 'O son! Your highest duty is to keep your mind always on religion and to respect the Brāhmaṇas. Never speak falsely anywhere nor follow any bad course in any way. Rather the words of the spiritual good persons ought to be fully observed; the ascetics ought to be worshipped. Senses must be controlled and the wicked cruel robbers are certainly to be slain. O son! For one's success, one should consult with one's ministers and keep that secret by all means. Any enemy howsoever insignificant he may be, a clever King should never overlook him. The ministers, if they be attached to other masters and if they come round afterwards, don't trust them. Spies should be kept to watch friends and foes alike. Show your living regards to the religion always, and make charitable gifts. One ought not to argue in vain and always avoid the company of the wicked. O son! You should worship the Mahārṣis and perform various sacrifices. Never trust women, those who are inordinately addicted to women, and the gamblers. Never is it advisable to be addicted too much to hunting. Always show your back to gambling, drinking, music and to the prostitutes, and try to make your subjects follow the same. Early in the morning at the *brahma-muhūrta* every day, you should get up from your bed, bathe and perform other analogous duties. O son! Be initiated by the *guru* in the Devī Mantra, and worship

with devotion the Supreme Force, the Bhagavatī. Human birth is crowned with success by worshipping Her lotus feet, O son! He who performs once the great *pūjā* of the Mahā Devī and drinks the *caranāmṛta* water with which Her feet are worshipped, has never to enter again in the womb of a mother; know this as certain. That Mahā Devī is all that is seen, and She Herself is again the Seer and Witness, of the nature of pure Intelligence. Filled with these ideas, rest fearless like the Universal Soul. Do your daily *naimittik* (occasional) duties, go to the Brāhmaṇas' assembly, and calling on them, ask the conclusions of the *dharma-śāstras*. The Brāhmaṇas, versed in the *Vedas* and *Vedānta*, are objects of veneration and must be worshipped. Give, then, to them always according to merits, cows, lands, gold, etc. Don't worship any Brāhmaṇa who is illiterate. Don't give to illiterates more than their belliful wants.

O child! Never trespass *dharma* out of covetousness, and remember always not to insult ever afterwards any Brāhmaṇas. The Brāhmaṇas are the cause of the Kṣatriyas, the more so they are the terrestrial gods; honor them with all your care! In this never flinch from your duties. Fire comes out of water; the Kṣatriyas come out of the Brāhmaṇas; iron comes out of stones. The powers of these flow everywhere. But if there be any clash between one thing and its source, then that clash dies away in the source. Know this as quite certain. The King who wants his own welfare and improvement must by gift and humility show his respect especially to the Brāhmaṇas. Follow the maxims of morality as dictated in the *dharma-śāstras*. Amass wealth according to rules of justice and fill the treasury.'

Here ends the Eleventh Chapter of the Seventh Skandha about the story of Triśaṅku in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XII—Vasiṣṭha's curse on Triśaṅku

1-6. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus giving the advice to his son, the King Triśaṅku was excited with feelings of love and, in a choked voice, said to

his father that he would fulfil what he had been ordered. The King then called the Brāhmaṇas, versed in the *Vedas* and *mantrams*, and had all the materials for installation collected quickly. He brought the waters from all the sacred places of prigrimages; he then called together with great respect all the kings. On a sacred day, the father installed his son on the throne and gave him, in accordance with due rites and ceremonies, the royal throne. The King with his wife then adopted the third *vānaprastha* stage of life and practiced severe *tapasyā* on the banks of the Ganges. Then in due course of time the King went to the Heavens. There he began to shine like a second Sun by the side of Indra, respected by all the gods."

7-10. Janamejaya said: "O Bhagavān! You spoke before in course of conversation that Satyavrata was cursed by Vasiṣṭha on the killing of his cow to become a *piśācha;* how then he got himself freed from this curse? There is a doubt on this point. Kindly clear it and oblige. Satyavrata was cursed; hence pronounced unfit to succeed to the throne. How, by what actions, was he freed of the curse? How could the father bring back to his home his son of the form of a *piśācha?* O Viprarsi! Kindly narrate to me how the Muni was freed of his curse."

11-18. Vyāsa said: "Cursed by Vasiṣṭha, Satyavrata became then and there transformed into a *piśācha*, very ugly, violent and terrible to all; but when he worshipped the Devī with devotion, immediately the Devī gave him a beautiful divine body. By the grace of the Devī, his sins were all washed away and his *piśācha* form vanished. Satyavrata, then, freed from his sins became very much vigorous and energetic. Vasiṣṭha also became pleased with him, blessed thus by the Supreme Force and so was his father, too. When his father died, the virtuous Satyavrata became King, governed his subjects and performed various sacrifices and worshipped, too, the Eternal Mother of the Gods. O King! Triśaṅku had a very beautiful son born to him, named Hariścandra, endowed in all his limbs with auspicious signs. The King Triśaṅku wanted to make his son the Yuvarāja, the Crown prince and then in his that very body while living, enjoy the Heavens. The King went

to the *āśrama* of Vasiṣṭha and gladly asked him, with folded palms, bowing down before him duly.

19-23. 'O ascetic! You are the son of Brahmā, versed in all the *Vaidik mantrams;* so you are exceedingly fortunate; now I beg to inform you one thing; hear it gladly. I now desire to enjoy the happiness of the Heavens and all the enjoyments of the Devas, while I am in this body. To enjoy in the Nandana Garden, to live with the Apsarās and to hear the sweet music of the Devas and the Gandharvas, these ideas now have taken a strong hold of my heart. Therefore, O great Muni! Engage me in such a sacrifice as will enable me, in this very body to live in the Svarloka. O Muni! You are fully competent to do this; therefore be ready for this. Have the sacrifice done and let me have quickly the Devaloka, so difficult to be obtained!'

24-26. Vasiṣṭha said: 'O King! It is exceedingly hard to live in the Heavens while in this mortal body. The departed only live in the Heavens by their merits, this is a known fact. Therefore, O omniscient one! Your desire is hard to be attained. I am afraid of this. O King! The living men can hardly enjoy the Apsarās. Therefore, O blessed one! Do the sacrifice first. Then, when you leave this body, you will go to the Heavens.'

27-31. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Mahārṣi Vasiṣṭha was already angry with the King; therefore when he spoke these words, the King heard and became absent-minded. He again spoke to the Mahārṣi: 'O Brāhmaṇa! If you do not allow me to do the sacrifice on account of your haughtiness, I will have the sacrifice performed now by another priest.'

Vasiṣṭha became very angry at the words of the King and cursed him: 'O evil-minded One! Be as soon as possible a *caṇḍāla* in this body. You have committed acts by which your path to the Heaven is obstructed. You have stolen a Brāhmaṇa's wife and defiled the path of religion; you have killed the Surabhi Cow and you are a libertine. Therefore, O sinner! Never you will go to the Heavens, even after your death.'

32-56. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing these harsh words from the *guru*, Triśaṅku became immediately a *caṇḍāla* in that very body. His golden earrings became turned into iron; the sweet sandal smell over his body smelled like faeces; his beautiful yellow clothing became blue, and the color of his body became like that of an elephant, due to the curse. O King! Those who are the worshippers of the Supreme Force can produce such things when they are angry; there is not the slightest doubt in this. Therefore one ought never to insult any devotee of the Supreme Force. The Muni Vasiṣṭha is always engaged in repeating silently the Gāyatrī of the Devī. So what wonder is there that the body of the King will be reduced to such a wretched state by his rage.

The King Triśaṅku became very sorry to see his ugly body; he did not go home; rather he remained in the forest in that form and poor dress. He began to think, distressed with sorrow and overpowered with misery: 'My body is now blameable to the extreme, so what to do and where to go in this wretched state? I find no remedy to exhaust all my sufferings. If I go home, my son will no doubt be very much pained with sorrow. My wife, when she will see my *caṇḍāla* appearance, she won't accept me; my ministers will not regard me as they used to do before. My friends and relations, when they will come to me, will not serve me with the former care. So it is far better to die than to live, thus despised. I will drink poison or drown myself in water or hang myself. Or I will burn myself in the funeral pyre duly or I will quit this blameable life by starvation. But, alas! I then will be guilty of suicide; so again due to this sin I will be born a *caṇḍāla* and I will be again cursed.'

Thus thinking, the King again thought that at present he ought not to commit suicide by any means. 'I will have to suffer for my *karma;* and, after due suffering, this *karma* will be exhausted. So I will suffer in this forest for my *karma* in this my body. Without the enjoyment of the fruits, the past actions can never die out; therefore all actions done by me, auspicious or inauspicious, I will enjoy or suffer in this place. Always to remain close to a holy *āśrama*, to wander in holy places of pilgrimage, to remember the Devī

Ambikā, and to serve the saints will now be my duties. Thus I will no doubt exhaust all my actions, residing in this forest; then, if chance permits, and if I meet with a saintly person, all my intentions will be crowned with success.'

Thus thinking, the King quitting his city went to the banks of the Ganges and repenting very much, remained there on the Ganges. The King Hariścandra came to know the cause of his father's curse, and with a sorrowful heart sent ministers to him. Like a *caṇḍāla*, the King was respiring frequently; at this time the ministers went to him and bowing humbly, said: 'O King! Your son has ordered us to come here; we have come at his command; we are the ministers of the King Hariścandra. Know this verily, O King! Kindly hear what the Crown Prince has said: "Go and bring my Father here without any delay." Therefore, O King! Cast aside your mental agonies and come to the city. The ministers, the subjects all will be always at your service. We will all try our best to please Vasiṣṭha, so that he may favor you. And that greatly illustrious Muni being pleased will certainly remove your sorrows quickly. O King! Thus your son has spoken to us many words; so now be pleased to go to your own abode.'

57-64. Vyāsa said: "O King! That *caṇḍāla*-like King, hearing even their words thus, did not consent to go back to his house. Rather he told them: 'Ministers, go back, all of you to the city; and at my word, tell my son that I won't go back to my house. Better leaving off all idleness, you govern the Kingdom carefully. Show your respect specially to the Brāhmaṇas and perform various sacrifices and worship the Devas. I do not like to go to the city of Ayodhyā with the high-souled ones in this blameable *caṇḍāla* form; so you all go back to Ayodhyā without any further delay. Install, at my order, my powerful son Hariścandra on the throne and do all these stately duties.'

When the ministers heard thus the King ordering them, they began to cry very much, and bowing down, they went away early out of the hermitage. On coming back to Ayodhyā they regularly installed on a sacred day the King Hariścandra with *abhiṣeka* water purified with *mantrams*. Thus the

powerful virtuous Hariścandra, on being installed on the royal throne by the command of the King, remembered always his father and began to govern his Kingdom with his ministers according to the dictates of *dharma.'*

Here ends the Twelfth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the description of Vasiṣṭha's curse on Triśaṅku in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIII—King Triśaṅku goes to Heaven

1-3. Janamejaya said: "O Muni! I see that at the command of the King, the ministers installed Hariścandra on the royal throne; but how Triśaṅku got rid of his *caṇḍāla* body? Kindly say. Was it that he bathed in the holy waters of the Ganges and lived in the forest? and when he died he was freed of the curse? or was it that *guru* Vasiṣṭha favored him by his grace and freed him of the curse? O best of Ṛṣis! I am extremely eager to hear the life of the King; therefore kindly describe to me in detail his wonderful career."

4-16. Vyāsa said: O King! The King became gladdened in his heart to install his son on the throne and began to pass his days in that forest in the meditation of Bhagavatī Bhavānī. Thus some time passed when Viśvāmitra, the son of Kauśika, completing his course of *tapasyā* with an intent mind, returned to his home to see his wife and sons. On coming back to his house, the intelligent Muni found his sons and other members of the family happy and well conditioned, became very glad and when his wife came to him for his service, asked her: 'O fair-eyed one! How did you spend your time in days of famine? There was nothing whatsoever of the stock of rice, etc., in the house; how then did you nourish these boys? Please speak to me. O fair one! I was very busy with my austerities, I could not therefore come to you and see my boys; how then, O beloved, and what measures did you resort to for their maintenance? O good and auspicious one! When I heard of the dire famine, I thought then "I have no wealth; so what shall I do if I go there?" Thus thinking I did not come then. O beautiful one! At that time, one day I was very hungry and being very much tired I entered

into the house of a *caṇḍāla*, with the object of stealing. On entering the house I found the *caṇḍāla* sleeping; then being extremely distressed with hunger, I entered into his kitchen if I could find anything there. When the dishes were sought and turned, and when I was going to take cooked dog's flesh I immediately fell into the sight of that *caṇḍāla*. He asked me very affectionately "Who are you? Why have you entered here at this hour of night? Why are your looking after the dishes? Speak what you want." O beautiful one! When the *caṇḍāla* asked me these questions, I was very much pressed by hunger and I spoke out my wants in a tremulous voice: "O fortunate one! I am an ascetic Brāhmaṇa very much pained by hunger; I have entered your house stealthily and am looking out for some eatables from your cooking pots. O intelligent one! I am now your guest in the form of a thief; I am now specially very hungry; so I will now eat your cooked meat; kindly permit me."

Hearing these words, the caṇḍāla spoke to me in words authorised by the *śāstras:* O one of the superior *varṇa!* Know this to be the house of a *caṇḍāla;* so never eat that flesh.

17-28. The human birth is very rare in this world; then again to be born a Dvīja is more difficult; and to get Brāhmaṇahood again in the Dvījas is exceedingly difficult. Are you not aware of this? They ought never to eat the defiled food who desire to attain to the Heavens; owing to *karma*, the Mahārṣi Manu has denominated the seventh caste as *antyaja* and has discarded them altogether. So, O Brāhmaṇa! I am now by my actions turned into a *caṇḍāla* and so forsaken by all; there is no doubt about this. I am forbidding you so that this fault of *varṇa-śaṅkara* may not suddenly attack you.'

Viśvāmitra said: 'O Knower of *dharma!* What you are speaking is quite true; though a *caṇḍāla*, your intelligence is very clear; hear, I will now speak to you the subtleties of the *dharma* in times of danger. O giver of respect! Always and by all means it is advisable to keep up the body. If sin be thereby incurred, one ought to perform *prāyaścitta* (penance) for its purification when the time of danger is over. But if one commits sin when

the time is not one of danger, one gets degraded; not so in the time of danger. The man that dies out of hunger, goes to hell, no doubt. Therefore every man seeking for his welfare must satisfy his hunger. Therefore I intend to steal for preserving my body. O *caṇḍāla.* See! The sin incurred in stealing during famine, which the Paṇḍitas have declared, goes to the God of rains until he does not pour forth rain." O beloved! Just when I spoke these words, the God of Rains began to pour forth rain so desired by all, like that coming out of the elephant's trunk. When the clouds thus poured forth rains with the glitterings of the lightning, I felt very glad and left the house of the *caṇḍāla.* O beautiful one! Now speak out to me, how did you behave in that famine time, so terrible to all the beings?'

29-48. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing the above words of the husband, the sweet speaking lady spoke: 'Hear, how I passed my time in times of famine. O Muni! After you had gone to practice *tapasyā*, the dire famine raged; and my sons, exhausted of hunger, became very anxious for food. I became very anxious to see the sons hungry; I then went out to the forest in quest of wild rice, and got some fruits. Thus I spent some months by collecting the rice growing wild in the forest; then in times these also could not be got, and I became again anxious. The Nibāra rice, too, is now not available and nothing is obtained also by begging; there are no fruits on the trees and no roots are found under the earth. The sons are crying in agony of hunger. What to do? And where to go? What am I to say now to the hungry boys? O God! Thus thinking on various ways, I at last came to this conclusion that I would sell one of my sons to a rich man and whatever price I can fetch, with that I will preserve the lives of the other sons. O dear! Thus thinking, I became ready and went out. O fortunate one! Then this boy began to cry aloud and became very distressed; yet I was so shameless that I took the crying boy and got out of my *āśrama*. At this time one Rājarsi Satyavrata seeing me very distressed, asked me "O One of good vows! Why is this boy weeping?" O Muni! I spoke to him "Today I am going to sell this boy." The King's heart became overfilled with pity, and spoke to me: "Take back to your *āśrama* this boy. Daily I will supply you with meat for the food of your boys until the Muni returns home." O Muni! The King

from that time used to bring, with great pity, daily the flesh of deer and boar killed by him in the forest and he used to tie that on this tree. O beloved! Thus I could protect my sons in that fearful ocean of crisis; but that King was cursed by Vasiṣṭha only for my sake. One day that King did not get any meat in the forest; so he slaughtered the *kāmadhenu* (the cow giving all

desires) of Vasiṣṭha and the Muni became therefore very angry with him. The high-souled Muni, angry on account of the killing of his cow, called the King by the name of Triśaṅku and made him a *caṇḍāla*. O Kauśika! The prince got turned into a *caṇḍāla* because he came forward to do good to me, so I am very sorry for his sake. So it is your urgent duty to save the King from his terrible position by any means or by the influence of your powerful *tapasyā*.'

49. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing these words from his wife the Muni Kauśika consoled her and said:

50-55. 'O lotus-eyed one! I will free the King of his curse, who saved you at that critical moment; more than this that I promise to you that I will remove his sufferings whether it be by my learning or it be by my *tapas*.' Thus consoling his wife at that moment, Kauśika, the knower of the Highest Reality, began to think how he could destroy the pains and miseries of the King. Thus thinking, the Muni went to the King Triśaṅku, who was staying at that time very humbly in a village of the *caṇḍālas*, in the garb of a *caṇḍāla*. Seeing the Muni coming, the King was greatly astonished and instantly threw himself before his feet like a piece of stick. Kauśika raised the fallen King and consoling him said: 'O King! You are cursed, on my account, by the Muni Vasiṣṭha. I will therefore fulfil your desires. Now speak what I am to do.'

56-62. The King said: 'With a view to perform a sacrifice I prayed to Vasiṣṭha that I would perform a sacrifice, kindly do this for me. O Muni! Do that sacrifice by which I can go to the Heavens in this my present body. Vasiṣṭha became angry and said: "O villain! How can you go and live in the

Heavens in this your human body?" I was very anxious to go to *svarga* (Heaven) so I again spoke to him: "O sinless one! I will then have the excellent sacrifice done by another priest."

Hearing this, Vasiṣṭha Deva cursed me, saying "Be a *caṇḍāla*." O Muni! Thus I have described to you all about my curse. You are the one quite able to remove now my grievances.' Distressed in pain and agony, the King informed him and became quiet. Viśvāmitra, too, thought how he could free him of his curse."

Here ends the Thirteenth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the coming of Viśvāmitra to Triśaṅku in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIV—Triśaṅku goes to Heaven

1-8. Vyāsa said: O King! Settling in his mind what to do, the great ascetic Viśvāmitra collected all the materials necessary for the sacrifice and invited all the Munis. Thus invited by Viśvāmitra, the Munis became informed all about the Sacrifice; but, owing to the fact that the Muni Vasiṣṭha prevented them, none of them went to the sacrifice. When Viśvāmitra, the son of Gādhi, came to know this, he became very anxious and very sad and came to the King Triśaṅku and sat. Mahārṣi Kauśika then became angry and said: 'O King! Vasiṣṭha preventing the Brāhmaṇas have all refused to come to the sacrifice. But, O King! See my power of *tapasyā;* I will immediately fulfil your desires; I will instantly send you to the Heavens, the abode of the Gods.' Thus saying, that Muni took water in his hand repeated the Gāyatrī *mantram*. He gave to the King all the *puñyā* (merits) that he had collected for himself up to then.

Giving him thus all the *puñyā*, he spoke to the King: 'O King! Throw away all idleness and go to the abode of the Gods you wanted to go. O King of Kings! Gladly go to the Heavens by the power of all the merits collected by me for a long time and let you fare well there.'

9-20. Vyāsa spoke: "O King! When the King of the *vipras* Viśvāmitra spoke thus, the King Triśaṅku, by virtue of the Muni's *tapas*, got high up in the air without any delay like a quick flying bird. Thus getting up and up, when the King reached the abode of Indra, the Devas, seeing the terrible *caṇḍāla*-like appearance of Triśaṅku, spoke out to Indra: 'Who is this person coming like a Deva with a violent speed in the air? Why does he look like a *caṇḍāla* and is so fierce-looking?' Hearing thus, Indra got up at once and saw that one, the meanest of the human beings and knowing him to be Triśaṅku, reproachingly said to him: 'You are a Caṇḍāla, quite unfit for the Devaloka; so where are you going? You ought not to remain here; so go immediately back to the earth.'

O Destroyer of the enemies! Indra speaking thus, the King dropped from the Heavens and, like a Deva whose merits had been exhausted, fell down immediately. Triśaṅku then cried out frequently 'O Viśvāmitra! O Viśvāmitra! Being displaced from the Heavens I am now falling very violently; so save me from this trouble.' O King! Hearing his cry and seeing him getting down, Viśvāmitra said: 'Wait, wait.' Though displaced from Heaven, the King by virtue of the Muni's *tapas*, remained stationed at that place in the middle of the air. Viśvāmitra then began to do *ācamana* (sip water) and commenced his great Sacrifice to create another new creation and a second Svargaloka (Heaven). Seeing his resolve, the Lord of Śachī became very anxious and eagerly came to the son of Gādhi without the least delay and said: 'O Brāhmaṇa! What are you going to do? O Saint! Why are you so very angry? O Muni! There is no necessity to create another new creation. Order now what I am to do.'

21. Viśvāmitra said: 'O Lord of the Devas! The King Triśaṅku has become very miserable to have a fall from the Heavens. Therefore this is now my intention that you gladly take him to your own abode.'

22-31. Vyāsa said: "O King! Indra was thoroughly aware of his determined resolve and very powerful asceticism; so he accepted to do according to his word, out of terror. Lord Indra then gave the King a bright and divine body and made him take his seat in an excellent car; and taking leave of Kauśika

went with the King to his own abode. Viśvāmitra became glad to see Triśaṅku go to the Heavens with Indra and remained happy in his own *āśrama*. King Hariścandra, now hearing that his father has gone to Heaven by virtue of his *tapas*, began to govern his kingdom with a gladdened heart. The King of Ayodhyā began then to live constantly with his clever wife full of youth and beauty. Thus time passed away; but his beautiful wife did not become pregnant. The King became very sorry and thoughtful. He then went to the holy hermitage of Vasiṣṭha and bowing down informed him of his mental agony due to his getting no son.

'O Knower of Dharma! You are skilled in the science of *mantrams*. Especially you know everything of Daiva (Fate). So, O giver of honor! Do for me so that I get a son. O best of Brāhmaṇas! There is no salvation for one who has not got any son; you are well aware of this. Then why do you overlook my case when you can remove my sorrow? Even these sparrows are blessed who nourish their offsprings. And I am so very unfortunate that day and night, I am immersed in cares and anxieties, due to my not having any son.'

32. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing these pitiful utterances of the King, Vasiṣṭha thought over in his mind and spoke to him everything in particular.

33-41. Vasiṣṭha said: 'O King! True you have spoken that in this world there is no other sorrow more painsgiving than the state of not having any issue. Therefore, O King! you worship with great care the water-god Varuṇa. He will crown your efforts with success. There is no other god than Varuṇa to grant sons. So, O virtuous one! Worship him and you will get success. Both Fate and self-exertion are to be respected by men; how can success come unless efforts are made? O King! Men who realize the Highest Truth should make efforts, guided by just rules; success comes to those who work; else never one is to expect success.'

Hearing these words of the *guru*, of unbounded energy, the King made a fixed resolve and bowing himself down, went away to practice *tapasyā*. On

the banks of the Ganges, in a sacred place, seated in *padmāsana*, the King became merged in the meditation of the God Varuṇa with noose in his hand, and thus practiced severe asceticism. O King! When he was doing this, Varuṇa took pity on him and gladly came before his sight. Varuṇa, then, spoke to the King Hariścandra: 'O knower of *dharma!* I am glad at your *tapasyā.* So ask boons from me.'

42-43. The King said: 'O God! I am without any son; give me a son who will give me happiness and will free me from the three debts that I owe to the Devas, the Pitṛs and the Ṛṣis. Know that with that object I am doing this *tapasyā*.' Then the God Varuṇa, hearing these humble words of the sorrowful King, smiled and said.

44-45. 'O King! If you get your desired well-qualified son, what will you do for me to my satisfaction? O King! If you perform a sacrifice in honor of me and fearlessly sacrifice your son there like an animal, I will then grant you your desired boon.'

46-47. The King said: 'O Deva! Free me from this state of sonlessness; O water god! When my son will be born, I will do your sacrifice with my son as an animal in that. This I speak truly to you. O giver of honor! There is no suffering more unbearable than this one, not to have any son; so grant me a good son so that all my sorrows be vanished.'

48. Varuṇa said: 'O King! You will get a son as you desire; go home; but see what you have spoken before be fulfilled and turned true.'

49-55. Vyāsa said: "Hearing these words from Varuṇa, Hariścandra went back and told everything about his getting the boon to his wife. The King had one hundred exquisitely beautiful wives, of whom Śaivyā was the lawful wife and queen and was very chaste. After some time, that wife became pregnant and the King became very glad to hear this and her longings in that state. The King performed all her purificatory ceremonies, and when ten months were completed, and on an auspicious *nakṣatra* and on an auspicious day, she gave birth to a son, like that of a Deva son. On

the birth of his son, the King surrounded by the Brāhmaṇas, performed his ablutions and first of all performed the natal ceremonies and distributed innumerable jewels and much wealth; and the King's joy knew no bounds at that time. The liberal King gave away, in special charities, wealth, grains, and various jewels and lands and had the performance of music, dancing and other things."

Here ends the Fourteenth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the going to Heavens of Triśaṅku and the commencement of Hariścandra's narrative in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XV—the Story of King Hariścandra

1-7. Vyāsa said: "O King! When the grand festivities for the son's birth ceremonies were going on in the King's palace, Varuṇa Deva came there in the holy Brāhmaṇa form. 'Let welfare be on you.' Saying this, Varuṇa began to say: 'O King! Know me to be Varuṇa. Now hear what I say. O King! Your son is now born; therefore perform sacrifices in honor to me with your son. O King! Your defect of not having a son is now removed; so fulfil what you promised before.' Hearing these words, the King began to think 'Oh! Only one lotus-faced son is born to me; how can I kill him? On the other hand, the powerful Regent (Lokapāla) of one quarter is present in Brāhmaṇa form; and it never behoves one to show disrespect to a Deva or to a man who wishes welfare to us. Again it is very difficult to root out the affection for a son; so what am I to do now? How shall I preserve my happiness due to the birth of my son?' The King, then, with patience bowed down to him, worshipped him duly and humbly spoke to him in beautiful words, pregnant with reason.

8-10. 'O Deva of the Devas! I will obey your order no doubt, and I will perform your sacrifice according to the Vedic rites and with profuse *dakśiṇās* (remuneration to priests, etc.) But, when in a sacrifice human beings are immolated as victims, both the husband wife are entitled to the ceremony. Father becomes purified on the tenth day and mother on the

expiration of one month after the son's birth; so how can I perform the sacrifice until one month expires? You are omniscient and the master of all the beings; and you know what is *nitya-dharma*. So, O Varuṇa Deva! I want one month time; and show mercy thus on me.'

11-19. Vyāsa said: "O King! The King Hariścandra saying thus, Varuṇa Deva spoke to the King: 'O King! Welfare be unto you! Do your duties; I am now going back to my place. O King! I will come again after one month. Better finish the natal ceremonies and the *nāmakarana* ceremony regularly and then perform my sacrifice.' O King! When Varuṇa Deva turned his back, the King began to feel happiness. Then the King gave as gifts millions of cows, yielding plenty of milk and ornamented with gold, and mountains of *til* (sesame) to the Brāhmaṇas versed in the *Vedas* and gave his son the name, with formal ceremonies as Rohitāśva.

When one month became complete, Varuṇa Deva came again in a Brāhmaṇa form and said: 'O King! Start the sacrifice just now!' The King, on seeing the God of Waters, at once fell into an ocean of anxieties and sorrows; he then bowed down and worshipping him as a guest, spoke to him with folded palms: 'O Deva! It is to my great fortune that you have landed your feet at my place; O Lord! My house has been sanctified to day. O Deva! I will do, no doubt, your desired sacrifice according to the rites and ceremonies. But see, the victims that have not their teeth come as yet are not fit for a sacrifice; so the well-versed Paṇḍitas say; so I have settled I would perform your great sacrifice, as desired by you, when the teeth will come out of my son.'

20-41. Vyāsa said: "O Lord of men! Hearing thus, Varuṇa spoke 'Let it be so,' and went away. The King Hariścandra became glad and passed his days in enjoyments in his household. When the teeth of the child got out, Varuṇa knew it and came again in a Brāhmaṇa garb in the palace and spoke: 'O King! Now commence my sacrifice.' Seeing the Brāhmaṇa Varuṇa there, the King, too, bowed down and gave him a seat and showing all respects to him, worshipped him. He sang hymns to him and very humbly said with his head bent low: 'O Deva! I will perform your desired sacrifice

with plenty of *dakśinā* according to rites and ceremonies. But the child's *chūdākarana* (the ceremony of tonsure) is not yet done; so the hairs that were at the birth time are still there and the child cannot be fit for sacrifice as long as those hairs exist. So I have heard from the elderly persons. O Lord of Waters! You know the *śāstrik* rules; kindly wait until the *chūdākarana* is over. When the child will have his head shaven, I will certainly perform your sacrifice; there is no doubt about this.'

Hearing these words, Varuṇa spoke to him again: 'O King! Why are you deceiving me like this so often? O King! Now you have all the materials ready for the sacrifice; only for your filial affection you are deceiving me. However, if, after the ceremony of tonsure, you do not perform my sacrifice, I will be angry and I will curse you. O King! I am going for the present; but see do not tell lies, being born in the family of Ikṣvāku.' Instantly Varuṇa disappeared; the King, too, felt himself happy in his household. When the ceremony of tonsure was commenced and grand festivities were held, on the occasion Varuṇa soon came again to the King's palace. The queen was then sitting before the King with the child in her lap when Varuṇa came up there. The Brāhmaṇa Varuṇa then appeared like a Flaming Fire and spoke to the King in a clear voice: 'O King! Start the sacrifice.'

Seeing him, the King was confused with terror and with folded palms, quickly bowed down to him. After worshipping him duly, he very humbly said: 'O Lord! Today I will perform your sacrifice. But kindly hear with attention my saying and then do what is advisable. O Lord! If you approve of this as reasonable, I then open my heart to you. The three *varṇas* Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, and Vaiśyas become Dvījas (twice- born) only when they are duly purified according to proper rules and ceremonies; without any such purifications they are certainly Śūdras. So the Paṇḍitas versed in the *Vedas* declare. My child is now an infant only; so he is like a Śūdra. When his thread ceremony (*upanayana*) will be performed, he will then be fit for the sacrifice; this the *veda-śāstras* declare. The Kṣatriyas are so purified in their eleventh year; the Brāhmaṇas in their eighth year and the

Vaiśyas in their twelfth year. So, O Lord of the Devas! If you feel pity for your this humble servant, then wait until the *upanayana* ceremony is over, when I will perform your grand sacrifice with my son. O Vibhu! You are the Lokapāla; specially you are conversant with all the *śāstrik* rules and have acquired the knowledge of *dharma*. If you think my saying as true, then go to your home.'

42-51. Vyāsa said: "Hearing these words, Varuṇa's heart was filled with pity and so he went away instantly, saying 'Let it be so.' Varuṇa going away, the King felt very glad and the queen, knowing the welfare of the son became glad too. Then the King gladly performed his state duties. After some time, the child grew ten years old. Consulting with the peaceful Brāhmaṇas as well as his ministers, he collected materials for the *upanayana* ceremony befitting his position. When the eleventh year was completed by his son, the King arranged everything for the thread ceremony but when his thoughts turned to Varuṇa's sacrifice, he became very sad and anxious. When the thread ceremony began to be performed, the Brāhmaṇa Varuṇa came there. Seeing him, the King instantly bowed down and standing before him with clasped palms, gladly spoke to him: 'O Deva! My son's *upanayana* being over, now my son is fit for the victim in the sacrifice; and by your grace, my sorrow that was within me as not having a son, has vanished. I speak truly before you that, O knower of virtue! after some mere time I have desired to perform your sacrifice with plenty of *dakśiṇās*. In fact, when the *samāvartana* ceremony will be over, I will do as you like. Kindly wait until then.'

52-62. Varuṇa said: 'O intelligent one! You are very much attached to your son now, and so by various reasonable plays of intellect, you are repeatedly deceiving me. However, I am going home today at your request but know certain that I will come again at the time of the *samāvartana* ceremony. (*Samāvartana* means the return home, especially of a pupil from his tutor's house after finishing his course of study there.)

O King! Thus saying, Varuṇa went away and the King became glad and began to perform duly his various duties. The prince was very intelligent;

and as he used to see Varuṇa coming, now and then, at the time of the ceremonies, he became very anxious. He then made enquiries outside hither and thither and came to know of his own being about to be killed and he desired to quit the house instantly. He then consulted with the minister's sons and came to a final conclusion and went out of the city to the forest. When the son had gone to the forest, the King became very much afflicted with sorrow and sent messengers in quest of him.

When some time passed away, Varuṇa came to his house and spoke to the distressed King: 'O King! Now perform your desired sacrifice.' The King bowed down to him and said: 'O Deva! What shall I do now? My son has become afraid and has gone away. I do not know where he has gone. O Deva! My messengers have searched for him in difficult places in mountains, in the hermitages of the Munis, in fact, in all the places; but they have not been able to find him out anywhere. My son has left his home; order now what I can do. O Deva! You know everything; so judge I have got no fault in this matter. It is certainly luck and nothing else.'

63-66. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing these words of the King, Varuṇa became very much angry and when he saw that he was deceived so many times by the King, he then cursed, saying: 'O King! As you have cheated me by your deceitful words, so you be attacked by dropsy (hyperaldosteronism or edema) and be severely pained by it.' Thus cursed by Varuṇa, the King was attacked with that disease and began to suffer much. Cursing thus, Varuṇa went back to his own place and the King was much afflicted with that terrible disease.

Here ends the Fifteenth Chapter in the Seventh Skandha on the story of the King Hariścandra in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVI—the story of Śunaḥśepha

1-4. Vyāsa said: "O King! When Varuṇa went away, the King was very much laid down with that dropsy. Daily his pains began to increase and he

began to suffer extreme pains. O King! The prince, on the other hand, heard in the forest, of the illness of his father and filled with affection, wanted to go to his father. A year had passed away and the prince desired very gladly to go to his father and see him. Knowing this, Indra came there. He came instantly in the form of a Brāhmaṇa and with favorable arguments desisted the prince, who was about to go to his father.

5-31. Indra said: 'O Prince! It seems you are silly; you know nothing of the difficult state policies. Therefore it is that you are ready to go, out of sheer ignorance, to your father. O fortunate one! If you go there, your father will get his sacrifice, where a human victim is to be offered, performed by the Vedic Brāhmaṇas and your flesh will be offered as oblations to the blazing Fire. O child! The souls of all the beings are very dear; it is for that reason, for the sake of soul, that sons, wife, wealth and jewels are all dear. Therefore, though you are his dear son, like his son, yet he will certainly have you killed and get *homas* offered to free himself from the disease. O Prince! You ought not to go home now; rather when your father dies, you would certainly go there and inherit your Kingdom.'

O King! Thus hindered by Vāsava, the prince remained in that forest for one year more. But when the prince again heard of the severe illness of his father, he wanted again to go to his father, resolved to court the death of his ownself. Indra again came there in the form of a Brāhmaṇa and, with reasonable words, repeatedly advised him not to go there. Here, on the other hand, the King Hariścandra became very much distressed and troubled by the disease and asked his family priest Vasiṣṭha Deva: 'O Brāhmaṇa! What is the sure remedy for the cure of the disease?'

Vasiṣṭha, Brahmā's son, said: 'O King! Purchase one son by giving his value; then perform the sacrifice with that purchased son and you will be free from the curse. O King! The Brāhmaṇas versed in the *Vedas* say that sons are of ten kinds, of whom the son purchased by paying its proper value, is one of them. So buy one son. There will very probably be within your kingdom a Brāhmaṇa who might sell his son out of avarice. In that case Varuṇa Deva will certainly be pleased and grant your happiness.'

Hearing these words of the high-souled Vasiṣṭha, the King became glad and ordered his minister to look after such a son.

There lived in that King's dominion one Brāhmaṇa, named Ajigarta, very poor; he had three sons. The minister spoke to him to purchase his son: 'I will give you one hundred cows; give one son of yours for the sacrifice. You have three sons named respectively Śunahpuchcha, Śunaḥśepha and Śunolangula. Give me out of them one son and I will give you one hundred cows as his value.' Ajigarta was very much distressed for want of food; so when he heard the proposal, he expressed his desire to sell his son. He thought that his eldest son was the rightful person to perform funeral obsequies and offer *piṇḍa* and he therefore did not sell him. The youngest son, too, he did not sell also, as he considered him his favorite. At last, he sold his second son for the price of one hundred cows.

The King then bought him and made him the victim for the sacrifice. When that boy was fastened to the sacrificial post, he began to tremble and very much distressed with sorrow, began to cry. Seeing this, the Munis cried out in a very pitiful tone. When the King gave permission for the immolation of that boy, the slaughterer did not take weapons to slaughter him. He told that he would never be able to kill the boy, since he is crying in a very pitiful tone. When he thus withdrew himself from his work, the King then asked his councillors: 'O Devas! What ought to be done now?' Śunaḥśepha then began to cry in a very pitiful voice; the people present there began to discuss and there arose a great noise on the affair. Then Ajigarta stood up in the midst of the assembly and spoke: 'O King! Be patient; I will fulfil your desire. I am desirous of wealth and if you give me double the amount, I will slay immediately the victim; and you can complete early your sacrifice.' O King! He who is hankering after money, can always entertain feelings of enmity even towards his own son. There is no doubt about this.

32-35. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing those words of Ajigarta, Hariścandra gladly spoke to him: 'I will immediately give you another hundred excellent cows.' Hearing thus, the son's father, avaricious of wealth, immediately resolved and became ready to slay his son. All the councillors

seeing the father ready to slay his son, were struck with sorrow and began to lament exclaiming 'Alas! This wretch, a disgrace to his family, is now ready to kill his own son. Oh! We never saw before such a cruel vicious person. This Brāhmaṇa must be a Demon in a Brāhmaṇa body!

36-38. Fie on you! O *caṇḍāla!* What a vicious work are you now going to do? What happiness do you derive by slaying the son, the jewel of jewels, only to get some wealth? O sinner! It is stated in the *Vedas* that the soul takes its birth from one's body; so how are you going to slay your soul?' When the hue and cry arose in the assembly, Viśvāmitra, the son of Kauśika, went to the King and, out of pity, said:

39-56. 'O King! Śunaḥśepha is very piteously crying; so let him be free; and then your sacrifice will be complete and you will be free of your disease. There is no virtue like mercy and there is no vice like killing (*himsā*). What is written about killing animals in the sacrifice is only meant for the persons inclined to sensual objects and to give them a stimulus in that direction. O King! He who wants his own welfare and who wants to preserve his own body ought not to cut another's body. He who pities equally all the beings, gets contented with trivial gain and subdues all his senses; God is soon pleased with him. O King! You should treat all the *jīvas* like yourself and thus always spend your life, so dear to all. You desire to preserve your body by taking away the life of this boy; similarly why would he not try to preserve his own body, the receptacle of happiness and pleasures? O King! You have desired to kill this innocent Brāhmaṇa boy; but he will never overlook this enmity of yours done in previous lives. If anybody kills another willingly, though he has got no enmity with him, then the one that is killed will certainly kill afterwards the slayer. His father, out of greed for money, is deprived of intellect and so has sold away his son. The Brāhmaṇa is certainly very cruel and sinful. There is no doubt about this. When one goes to Gayā or one performs an Aśvamedha sacrifice or when one offers a blue bull (*nila-vrisabha*), one does so on the consideration that one would desire to have many sons. Moreover the King has to suffer for one-sixth of the sins committed by anyone in his Kingdom.

There is no doubt about this. Therefore the King ought certainly to prohibit any man when he wants to do a sinful act. Why then did you not prevent this man when he desired to sell his son?

O King! You are the son of Triśaṅku; especially you are born in the Solar line of Kings. So how have you desired, being born an *āryān*, to do an act becoming an *an-āryā* (non-*āryān*)? If you take my word and quickly free this Brāhmaṇa boy, you will certainly derive virtue in your body. Your father was converted into a *caṇḍāla* by a curse but I sent him in his very body to the Heavens. And you are well acquainted with this fact. Therefore, O King! Keep my word out of your love for that. This boy is very pitifully crying; so free him. I pray this from you, in this your Rājasūya sacrifice, and if you do not keep my word, you will incur the sin of not keeping your word. Do you not realize this? O King! You will have to give anything that a man wants from you in this sacrifice; but if you do otherwise, sin will attack you, no doubt.'

57-59. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing these words of Kauśika, the King Hariścandra spoke thus: 'O son of Gādhi! I am suffering very much from dropsy; I will not be able therefore to free him. You can pray for some other thing. You ought not to throw obstacles in this my sacrifice.' Viśvāmitra became very angry at this, and seeing the Brāhmaṇa boy very distressed, became sorrowful and mourned very much.

Here ends the Sixteenth Chapter in the Seventh Skandha on the story of Śunaḥśepha in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVII—freeing Śunaḥśepha and curing Hariścandra

1-6. Vyāsa said: "O King! When Viśvāmitra saw that the boy was crying very pitifully, he went to him with a merciful heart and said: 'O child! I am giving you the Varuṇa *mantra;* recollect this within your mind and if you go on repeating that *mantra* silently, you will certainly fare well." The sorrowful Śunaḥśepha, hearing thus from Viśvāmitra, began to repeat

silently in his mind the *mantra*, clearly pronouncing each letter. O King! No sooner Śunaḥśepha repeated that *mantra* than the kind-hearted Varuṇa came suddenly before the boy, greatly pleased with him. Everyone in the assembly became thoroughly surprised to see Varuṇa Deva come there, and they all became glad and chanted hymns in honor of him. The diseased Hariścandra was also thoroughly surprised, fell to his feet, and with folded palms began to sing hymns to Varuṇa, standing before him.

7-14. Hariścandra said: 'O Deva of the Devas! I am very vicious; my intellect is much defiled; I am a sinner before you. O merciful one! Now show your mercy and sanctify this humble self. I was very much troubled on not having a son; so I had disregarded your words; now show your mercy on me; what offense can cling to him whose intellect is already out of order? A beggar does not see his own faults; I am also in want of a son; so I could not see my defects. O Lord! Being afraid of the terrors of hell, I have deceived you. Those who are sonless, cannot find rest anywhere. Especially he is barred from the Heavens. Being terrified by this dictate of *śāstra*, I have shown disregard to your words. O Lord! You are wise and I am ignorant; especially I am extremely afflicted by this terrible disease; I am also deprived of my son; so you ought not to take any notice of my faults. O Lord! I do not know where my son has gone; O merciful one! Perhaps he, being afraid of his life, has fled away to some forest. For your satisfaction, I have now commenced your sacrifice with this purchased boy; I gave an equivalent value and I have purchased this boy. O Deva of the Devas! Your sight only has taken away my infinite troubles; now if you be pleased, I can be free of my this disease dropsy and my troubles will all be over.'

Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the words of that diseased King, Varuṇa, the Deva of the Devas, took pity on him and thus spoke.

15-22. Varuṇa said: 'O King! Śunaḥśepha is uttering hymns of praise to me; he has become very distressed; so quit him. Your sacrifice, too, is now completed; now let you be free from your present disease.' Thus saying, Varuṇa freed the King of his disease in the presence of all his councillors;

the King became possessed of a beautiful body and got himself completely cured and shone bright before the assembly. Shouts of victory arose from the midst of the sacrificial ground when the Brāhmaṇa boy was freed of his bonds of rope, by the mercy of the high-souled Deva Varuṇa. The King became very glad on his being recovered immediately from his disease and Śunaḥśepha, too, became free from his anxiety and pacified when he got himself liberated from his being immolated on the sacrificial post. Then the King Hariścandra completed his sacrifice with great modesty.

Afterwards Śunaḥśepha addressed the councillors with folded palms and said: 'O councillors! You know well the *dharma;* O speakers of truth! Kindly specify according to the dictates of the *Vedas*. O omniscient ones! Whose son am I now? Who is my most respectful father? Please deliver your judgment and I will take his refuge.'

23-34. When Śunaḥśepha spoke thus, the members of the assembly began to speak to each other, 'The boy must be of Ajigarta; whose else can he be? This boy is born of the limbs of Ajigarta; and he has nursed him according to his might. So he must be his son; whose else can he be?' Vāma Deva then told the people of the assembly, 'The father of the boy sold his son for money; the King purchased him. So he can be said as the son of the King; or he may be called the son of Varuṇa, inasmuch as he freed him from his rope bondage. For he who nourishes another with food, who saves one from one's fear, who protects one by giving money, who bestows learning to anybody and he who gives birth to any of the above five classes of persons can be called his father.'

O King! Thus some turned out to be in favor of Ajigarta, some others in favor of the King; but nobody came to any definite conclusion. When matters stood in this doubtful condition, the omniscient all-respected Vasiṣṭha Deva addressed the disputing members thus: 'O high-souled ones! Kindly hear what the *śrutis* say on this point. When the father has cut off his filial attachment and has sold his son, his fatherly connection has ceased. No doubt this boy was purchased by the King Hariścandra. But when the King fastened him to the sacrificial post, he also cannot be called

as the father. Again when this boy singing hymns in honor of Varuṇa, he being glad freed him of his bondage, so Varuṇa cannot be called his father. For whoever praises a god by the great *mantra*, that Deva becomes pleased with him and gives him wealth, life, cattle, kingdom and even final emancipation. Rather Viśvāmitra saved the boy by giving him in his critical moment the powerful great *mantra* of Varuṇa; hence the boy can be called as the son of Viśvāmitra and of none else.'

35-40. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing the words of Vasiṣṭha, all the members of the assembly gave their unanimous consent. Viśvāmitra with his heart filled with love, exclaimed, 'O son! Come to my house.' And caught hold of his right hand. Śunaḥśepha, too, accompanied him and went away. Varuṇa also went to his own abode with a gladdened heart. The councillors, too, departed. Freed from his disease, the King gladly began to govern his subjects. At this time his son Rohitā heard all about Varuṇa and became very glad and leaving the impassable forest passes and mountains, returned home. The messengers informed the King of the arrival of the prince; the King heard and his heart overflowed with love and he gladly came there with no delay.

41-48. Seeing the father coming, Rohitāśva became filled with love and overpowered with sorrow for long separation began to shed tears and fell prostrate at his feet. The King raised him up and embraced him gladly and smelling his head, enquired of his welfare. When the King was thus asking his son, taking him on his lap, the hot tears of joy flowed from his eyes and fell on the head of the prince. The King and the prince then began to govern together his kingdom. The King described in detail all the events of the sacrifice where human victims are immolated. He started next the Rājasūya sacrifice, the best of all sacrifices, and duly worshipping the Muni Vasiṣṭha, made him the *hotā* (priest) in that sacrifice. When this grand sacrifice was finished, the King respected the Muni Vasiṣṭha with abundant wealth.

Once, on a time, the Muni Vasiṣṭha went gladly to the romantic Heaven of Indra; and Viśvāmitra, too, went there also and both the Munis then met

with each other. The two Mahārṣis took their seats in that Heaven. But Viśvāmitra was astonished to see Vasiṣṭha greatly respected in Indra's hall of assembly and asked him, thus:

49. 'O Muni! Where have you received this great honor and worship? O Highly Fortunate One! Who has worshipped you thus? Speak out truly.'

50-53. Vasiṣṭha said: 'O Muni! There is a King named Hariścandra; he is very powerful and my client; that King performed the great Rājasūya sacrifice with abundant *dakśiṇā*. There is no other King truthful like him; he is virtuous, charitable, and ever ready in governing his subjects. O son of Kauśika! I have got my worship and honor in his sacrifice. O best of Dvījas! Are you telling me to speak truly? Again I speak truly to you that there never was a King truthful, heroic, charitable, and very religious like him nor there will be such a one.'

54. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing such words, Viśvāmitra, of a very angry temper, spoke to him with his reddened eyes:

55-59. 'O Vasiṣṭha! Hariścandra obtained a boon from Varuṇa when he made a certain promise; then he cheated Varuṇa with deceitful words. So he is a liar and cheat. Why are you praising then that King? O intelligent one! Let us now stake all our virtues that we have earned since our birth by our asceticism and studies. You have praised exceedingly that King who is a great cheat; but if I cannot prove him to be a liar of the first order, I will lose all my virtues from my birth; but if it be otherwise, then all your virtues will be destroyed.' Thus the two Munis quarrelled with each other and making this stake, departed from the Heavens and went to their respective *āśramas*.

Here ends the Seventeenth Chapter in the Seventh Skandha on the freeing of Śunaḥśepha and the curing of Hariścandra in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVIII—Quarrel between Hariścandra and Viśvāmitra

1-6. Vyāsa said: "O King! Once on a time Hariścandra went out to the forest on an hunting excursion; and, while roaming to and fro, he saw that a very beautiful lady was crying. The King, seeing this, took pity on her and asked: 'O fair one! Why are you in this forest crying alone? O large-eyed One! Has someone pained you? What is the cause of your sorrow? Express this quickly before me. Why have you come here in this dreadful lonely forest? What are the names of your husband your father? O beautiful one! In my kingdom, no demon can give any trouble to another's lady; I will immediately kill him who has given you this trouble. O thin-bellied one! Be comfortable; do not weep; tell me why you are in this sorrowful state; know that no sinner can remain within my territory.' Hearing the words of the King, the lady wiped out her tears by her hand began to say:

7-8. 'O King! I am Siddharupinī, of the nature of success; to get me, Viśvāmitra is practicing terrible austerities. So these troubles have arisen from him, the son of Kauśika. O King! For this reason I am sorry in your kingdom. O one of good vows! I am a gentle lovely lady; still that Muni is giving me so much trouble.'

9-16. The King said: 'O large-eyed one! No longer you will have to suffer any more pains. Be patient. I will go and make the Muni desist from his *tapasyā*.' Thus comforting the lady, the King went hurriedly to the Muni Viśvāmitra and, bowing down to him said with clasped palms: 'O Mahārṣi! Why are you ailing your body by this terrible severe austerity! O iighly intelligent one! For what great noble cause are you practicing this hard *tapasyā?* Speak truly to me. O Son of Gādhi! I will fulfil your desires; there is no need of your practicing this severe penance; please get out of it immediately. O Mahārṣi! You know everything; so what shall I say anything further? See! It ought not anyone to practice this extremely dreadful *tapasyā*, causing troubles to the people within my territory.' Thus prohibited by King Hariścandra, the Muni became very angry at his heart and went towards his own hermitage. The King,

too, went back to his palace. The Muni on his arrival at his hermitage, began to cogitate in his mind, 'Why has the King unjustly desisted me from my *tapasyā*?' and also the discussions that took place between him and Vasiṣṭha. Viśvāmitra became very angry at his heart and ready to take the vengeance of this. He thought over on many points and created a terrible demon of a dreadful appearance in the form of a boar and sent it to the territory of the King Hariścandra.

17-28. That terrible boar, of huge body, entered into the kingdom, raising a dreadful sound. The guards became afraid at his terrible noise. Entering into the forest, that boar began to whirl round and round and destroy the Mālati forest, at another place the Kadamba forest, and at others the Yūthikā forest. At other places he began to dig up the earth by his tusks and root out the Campaka, Ketakī, Mallikā and various other trees. At other places again, he rooted out nice gentle Uśīra, Karavīra, Muchukuṇḍa, Aśoka, Vakula, Tilaka and other trees and so massacred the nice gardens and forests.

The forest guards, then, taking their weapons, rushed forward on that boar. Those that were making garlands and the florists became very distressed and uttered uproars of consternation. That boar, as if an incarnation of death, though routed out with flights of arrows, could not be terrified; rather when he began to harass the guards very much, they became very much afraid and being very distressed took the refuge of the King and, trembling, said: 'O King! Protect us. Protect us.' And they cried piteously. Seeing the guards terrified and distressed, the King asked them: 'Whom do you fear so much and why you are so distressed? Speak truly before me. O guards! I do not fear the Deva nor the Demons; so tell me who has created this panic amongst you. I, no doubt, will send that vicious cheat unto the door of death by this arrow, who has come against me in this world. What sort of enemy is that? What is his form? What is his power and where is he residing now; speak this quickly to me. Be that enemy a Deva or a Dānava, I will slay him immediately by the multitude of arrows.'

29-31. The Mālākāras said: 'The enemy is not a Deva, nor a Dānava, Yakṣa nor a Kinnara; it is a boar of a huge body that has entered into the forest. Very powerful, he is uprooting by his teeth all the beautiful flower trees; in fact, he is ruining all the gardens and forests. O King! We shot arrows on him, struck him with cudgels and hurled stones at him so much; yet he did not get a bit afraid; rather he turned back to kill us.'

32-51. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing these words, the King's fury knew no bounds, and immediately getting on horseback, he went towards the garden and forest. Then the horsemen, elephant drivers, charioteers and infantry all followed him. When the King went there, he saw the terrible boar of a huge body, whirling round and round and making a peculiar sound in the forest; and he witnessed also the destroyed condition of the forest and became very angry. He then drew his bow and arrows and fell down on him to take away his life. Seeing the King coming angrily towards him with bow and arrows in his hands, the boar began to sound more terribly and ran forward before him. The King saw the boar coming towards him with his mouth wide open and began to shower arrows upon him to kill him. The boar immediately made those arrows useless, and very violently and quickly jumped and passed away, over the King. When the boar passed away, the King angrily drew his bow with great care and shot sharpened arrows at him. One moment the boar came in the King's sight; and at another moment he vanished away; thus the boar began to flee, uttering all sorts of sounds.

The King Hariścandra then became very angry and drawing his bow pursued him, mounted on a horse swift like the wind. The soldiers then entered the forest and scattered hither and thither; the King alone pursued the boar. The sun entered unto the meridian; and the King came to be alone in a lonely forest. His horse was fatigued, and he too, was tired of hunger and thirst. The boar went away out of sight. The King also lost his way in that dense jungle and became greatly absorbed with intense cares and anxieties. He then began to think, 'Where shall I now go? There is none to help me in this dense jungle. Especially I don't know the right path.' While

he was thus thinking, he saw, all of a sudden, a river with clear water in that lonely forest. He became much delighted to see the flowing river and, alighting from horseback, he drank that water and made the horse also drink it. He became much relieved by drinking; and though he was much bewildered not to find the right track, he wanted now to go to his own city. At this moment Viśvāmitra came up there in an old Brāhmaṇa form; the King also looking at him bowed down to the Brāhmaṇa garbed Viśvāmitra, who then spoke to the King: 'O King! Welfare be unto you! What for have you come here? O King! What object have you got in view in this lonely forest? Be calm and quiet and speak everything before me.'

52-58. The King said: 'O Brāhmaṇa! One powerful boar of a huge body entered into my garden and spoilt altogether all the gentle flower trees there. To desist that boar, I pursued him with bow in hand went out of the city. That powerful boar, very swift and, as it were, a magician, has escaped my sight and gone away, where I do not know. I pursued him and have come now to this place and I do not know where my soldiers have gone. O Muni! Now I am deprived of my men, I am hungry and thirsty. I do not know which is the road to my city; nor do I know where my soldiers have gone. O dear lord! It is to my great fortune that you have come in this lonely forest. Now I want to return to my home; kindly show me the way. I have completed my Rājasūya sacrifice. I always give everyone whatever he wants. This is known to everybody. O Dvīja! If you want money for your sacrifice, then come with me to Ayodhyā and I will give you abundance of wealth. I am Hariścandra, the famous King of Ayodhyā.'

Here ends the Eighteenth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the origin of the quarrel between Hariścandra and Viśvāmitra in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIX—Taking away of Hariścandra's Kingdom

1-12. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the words of the King Hariścandra, the Mahārṣi Kauśika smilingly said: 'O King! This *tīrtha* is very sacred; if

one bathes here, one is cleansed of one's sins and virtue springs up. So, highly fortunate one! Bathe in this and do peace-offerings (*tarpaṇam*) to your fathers. O King! This time is very auspicious and highly meritorious; so take a bath in this sacred *puñya-tīrtha* and make charity as far as it lies in your power. Svāyambhuva Manu says: "He, who arriving at a *tīrtha* capable to give high merits (*puñya*), does not bathe and make charity, deceives himself; so he is the slayer of his soul, no doubt. So, O King! Do meritorious acts as best as you can in this excellent *tīrtha*. Then I will show you the way and you will go to Ayodhyā. O Kākutstha! Today I will be pleased with your gifts and I will accompany you to show you the way; this I have decided.'

Hearing the deceitful words of the Mahārṣi, the King took off his upper garments and tying the horse on to a tree, went towards the river to bathe according to due rites. O King! So enchanted was the King by the Muni's words, that he got himself entirely under the control of the Muni. He duly completed his bath and offered peace offerings to the Devas and *pitṛs,* and then spoke to Viśvāmitra. 'O Lord! I am now making gifts to you. O fortunate one! Cows, land, jewels, elephants, horses, chariots or horses, etc., anything that you like I will give you just now. There is nothing that I cannot give. When I performed previously the Rājasūya sacrifice, I took then, before all the Munis, this vow. So, O Muni! you are also present at this principal *tīrtha* (place of pilgrimage); so express what you desire; I will give you your desired object.'

13-15. Viśvāmitra said: 'O King! Your glory is spread far and wide in this world; especially I have already heard that there is no second man charitable like you. The Muni Vasiṣṭha has said: "The King of the solar dynasty, Triśaṅku's son Hariścandra is foremost and first amongst the kings in this world, and there is no one so liberal-minded as he is; such a king there never was nor ever there will be. So, O King! Now the marriage time of my son has arrived; so I pray before you today, that you give me wealth to celebrate this marriage.'

16. The King said: ‘O Brāhmaṇa! Yes! Celebrate the marriage ceremony; I will give you your desired wealth. What more can be said than this that whatever wealth you would want, I will give that abundantly. There is no doubt about this.’

17-22. Vyāsa said: “O King! Hearing these words of the King, the Muni Kauśika became ready to deceive him and originating the *gāndharbī-māyā*, created a beautiful youth and one daughter aged ten years and showing them to the King, said, ‘The marriage of these two is to be celebrated today. O King! To marry the boys and the girls in the household is to earn more merits than the Rājasūya sacrifice. So today you will get that desired fruit if you make charities for the marriage of this Brāhmaṇa youth.’ The King was much enchanted by his *māyā;* so no sooner he heard those words, he immediately promised: ‘That will be done,’ he did not raise any objection whatsoever. Viśvāmitra then showed the way and the King went to his city. Viśvāmitra, too, thus deceiving the King, went back to his *āśrama*. When the King was staying in the *agṇiśālā* (kitchen), Viśvāmitra Muni went to him and said: ‘O King! The marriage rites have been finished; so today give me what I desire in this sacrificial hall.’

23-24. The King said: ‘O Brāhmaṇa! Speak out what you want; now I like to get fame. So if there be anything in the world that is not to be given by me, if you want, I will give that even to you, no doubt. The mortal possessing all wealth, if he does not earn good name and fame, capable to give happiness to him in his next world, passes his life in vain.’

25. Viśvāmitra said: ‘O King! Give to this bridegroom, while within this sacred sacrificial altar, your entire kingdom with the royal umbrella and *cāmara* for fanning the king and elephants, horses, chariots, infantry and all the gems and jewels.’

26-33. Vyāsa said: “O King! King Hariścandra was deluded by his *māyā;* so no sooner he heard the Muni’s words, he willingly said without the slightest consideration: ‘O Muni! I give as you pray, my this vast dominion to you.’ The very cruel Viśvāmitra then said: ‘O King! I have accepted your

offer; but O intelligent one! Give now the requisite *dakśiṇā* to complete your gift. Manu says gift without *dakśiṇā* is fruitless; so to get the fruit of your gift give *dakśiṇā* as duly fixed.'

The King was exceedingly surprised to hear this and said: 'O Lord! Kindly say what amount of wealth am I to give to you as *dakśiṇā*. O saint! Say the value of your *dakśiṇā*. O ascetic! Don't be impatient; I will give you the *dakśiṇā* to that amount, no doubt.' Hearing this, Viśvāmitra told to the King: 'At present give me two and a half loads of gold as Dakśiṇā.' The King Hariścandra became greatly amazed and promised: 'I will give you that,' he then anxiously mounted on his horseback and became ready to go quickly. At this time, his soldiers who lost their road in quest of their king, came to him. They were very glad to see him; but, seeing him anxious, they began to praise him in great haste.

34-47. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing their words, the King did not say anything, good or bad; but thinking on his own doing entered into a trance. 'Oh! What have I promised to give? I have made a gift of all that I have; I am cheated in this matter by the Muni like one robbed by a thief in a wilderness. My whole dominion including my dress I have promised to give to him. Moreover I will have to pay besides two and a half loads of gold. My brain seems to have been completely destroyed. What to do now? I did not know the cunningness of the Muni. Therefore I am cheated by this deceitful Brāhmaṇa. It is next to impossible to understand the work of Daiva. Oh! My Fate! What will happen to me now?'

Very much bewildered the King entered in the interior of the palace. The queen seeing her husband immersed in cares, enquired into the cause, thus: 'O Lord, why have you become so absent-minded? Kindly say what you are thinking now. O King! The son has come back from the forest before you completed your Rājasūya sacrifice; why then are you in grief now? Kindly speak out the cause of your sorrow. Nowhere is your enemy, strong or weak; only Varuṇa was angry with you; now he is also very satisfied. So there is nothing further for you to do to think. O King! Owing to cares, this

body gets weaker and weaker day by day. So nothing is like cares to lead one to death.'

When his dear wife said so, the King expressed to her somewhat the cause of his cares, good or bad. But the King was much absorbed with his cares so that he could not eat nor sleep, though his bedding was perfectly white and clear. Early in the next morning, when, getting up from his bed, he was anxiously doing his morning duties, Viśvāmitra came up there. When the sentinel informed the King of the arrival of Viśvāmitra, he gave order for him to enter. Viśvāmitra, the looter of his all and everything, came before him and told the King who repeatedly bowed down to him: 'O King! Now leave your kingdom and give me the gold that you promised as *dakśiṇā* and prove that you are truthful.'

48-63. Hariścandra said: 'O Lord! I have given you this vast dominion of mine; so my kingdom has now become yours; I am leaving this kingdom and going to somewhere else. O Kauśika! You need not think a bit for this. O Brāhmaṇa! You have taken my all according to the technical rule; so now I am unable to give you *dakśiṇā*. If, in time, wealth comes to me, I will at once give you your *dakśiṇā*.' Saying him thus, the King told his wife Śaivyā and his son Rohita, 'In this Agṇihotra room I say that I have given my vast dominion to the Muni Viśvāmitra. Elephants, horses, chariots, gold and jewels all I have given to him along with my kingdom. What more than this that save us three, everything else I have given to him. O Mahārṣi! Take fully this prosperous dominion; we are going somewhere else to a forest or a mountain cave.'

The exceedingly virtuous Hariścandra spoke thus to his wife and son, and, paying respects to the Muni, went out from his house. Seeing the King going thus away, his wife and son, afflicted with cares, followed him with their sad faces. Seeing thus, all the inhabitants of Ayodhyā cried aloud, and great consternation and uproar arose in the city. 'O King! What is this act that you have done? How has this suffering come to you? O King! The great Fate, without any consideration, has certainly deceived you.' The Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras, all the four *varṇas* gave vent to

their sorrows when they saw the King going away with his wife and son. The Brāhmaṇas and the other inhabitants of the city, all were afflicted with sorrows and began to abuse the vicious Brāhmaṇa saying that 'He is a cheat! O King! Give the gold for *dakśiṇā* and then go; or say that you will not be able to give and he will then not take the *dakśiṇā*. Or if you entertain within yourself any greed, then take back all your kingdom. O King! If you think that you have really made this gift, then give what you have promised. The son of Gādhi was saying so, when the King Hariścandra very humbly bowed down to him with folded palms and said to him.'

Here ends the Nineteenth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the taking away of Hariścandra's Kingdom in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XX—the Earnestness of Hariścandra

1-4. Hariścandra said: 'O Muni! I will not take my food until I pay you your Dakśiṇā in gold; know this to be my resolve; therefore O one of good vows! Discard all your anxieties for *dakśiṇā*. I am the King of the Solar dynasty; especially since the time I have completed my Rājasūya sacrifice, I give to every man whatever he desires. So, O lord! How can it be possible that I will not give what I have voluntarily promised myself? O best of Dvījas! I will certainly pay off your debt. I must give you the gold as you desire; be calm and patient; but you will have to wait one month; and on getting the money I will pay it off to you.'

5-8. Viśvāmitra said: 'O King! Kingdom, treasury and strength are the three sources of income; but you are now deprived of all these. Whence now do you expect to get gold? O King! Vain are your hopes to get money; what am I to do now? You are now wealthless and how can I, out of greed, give you trouble? O King! Better say 'I will not be able to give you Dakśiṇā,' and I will then quit my strong expectation and go away as I like. And you, too, can think that since you have no gold, how can you give money? and so you can go wherever you like with your wife and son.'

9-20. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing these words of the Muni, at his time of departure, the King said: 'O Brāhmaṇa! Be patient and I will certainly give you your *dakśiṇā*. O Dvīja! My wife, son and I myself are all healthy; so selling these, I will give you the money; there is no doubt about this. O Lord! Kindly enquire whether there is anyone who can purchase us and I will agree to become the slave with my wife and son. O Muni! You can sell all of us and the price you get, you can take two and a half loads of gold out of that and be pleased.' Thus saying, the King went to Benares where Śaṅkara was staying with his dear consort Umā. The King saw the beautiful city, the sight of which makes one's heart dance with more joy and he said that he had become blessed. Then he went to the banks of the Bhāgirathī and bathed in the Ganges and offered peace-offerings (*tarpanam*) to the Devas and *pitṛs,* and completing the worship of his iṣṭā Deva (his own Deity), looked around where he would go. The King entering into the beautiful city of Benares began to think that no human being is protecting this city but Śiva Himself is protecting it. So if he lives there, he would not be living in a city which has been given away by him to Viśvāmitra. The King, then, distressed much with pain and trouble and being very much bewildered, began to journey on foot with his wife and son and entered into the city and placed his confidence. At this moment he saw the Muni Viśvāmitra, wanting *dakśiṇā* and humbly bowed down and spoke with folded palms: 'O Muni! My dear wife, my son and I myself are living here; you can take any of us and have your work done; or say what other work we will have to do for you.'

21. Viśvāmitra said: 'You promised that you would pay Dakśiṇā at the end of one month; and today that one month is completed; if you remember, then give me the *dakśiṇā*.'

22. The King said: 'O Brāhmaṇa! You are wise and are endowed with the power of *tapas* (asceticism); as yet one month is not complete; still half a day is remaining; wait until then, and no longer.'

23-27. Viśvāmitra said: 'O King! Let it be. I will come again and if you do not give me then, I will curse you.' Thus saying Viśvāmitra went away. The

King then thought within himself how be would pay him back what he had promised. ‘There is no influential friend of mine in this Benares city who can help me with money; where then can I get the requisite money? I am a Kṣatriya. *Pratigraha* (begging or accepting any gift) is forbidden to me so how can I beg or accept any gift? According to the code of *dharma*, the offering of sacrifices on one’s own behalf, studying and giving are the three duties ordained to a King. And if I die not paying a Brāhmaṇa’s *dakśiṇā*, I will be burdened with the sin of stealing a Brāhmaṇa’s property; and I will then be born a worm or will became a *preta* (ghost). So to sell myself and pay off the debts is better than this.’

28-33. Sūta said: “O Ṛṣis! When the King was thus thinking humbly with his face bent downwards, and in a distracted state of mind, his wife spoke to him with tears in her eyes and in a voice, choked with feelings: ‘O King! Discard all cares and keep your own *dharma:* Truth. He who is divorced from Truth is forsaken like a *preta*. O best of all men! To keep one’s Truth is one’s *dharma;* there is no other *dharma* superior to it—so the sages declare. He whose words turn out false, his *agṇihotra*, study, and gifts and all action, become fruitless. Truth is very much praised in the *dharma-śāstra,* and this Truth raises up and saves the virtuous souls. Similarly falsehood, no doubt, drags a vicious man to hell. King Yayāti performed the horse sacrifice and the Rājasūya sacrifice and went to Heavens, but once he spoke falsely and so he was dislodged from the Heavens.’

34. The King said: ‘O Thou, going like an elephant! I have my son who will multiply my line; speak out what Thou wishest to say.’

35. The Queen said:’O King! The wives are meant for sons your having me has been fulfilled as there is your son. So sell me for the money value and give the *dakśiṇā* to the Brāhmaṇa. Let you not deviate from the Truth.’

36-45. Vyāsa spoke: “Hearing this, the King fainted. Afterward regaining consciousness, he wept with a grievous heart. ‘O gentle one! What you have uttered just now has caused me much pain; am I such a sinner as to forget entirely all your conversations and your sweet smiles! Alas! O sweet-

smiling one! You ought not to speak such words. O fair one! How have you been able to utter these harsh words not fit to be spoken?’ Speaking thus, the King became impatient at the idea of selling his wife and fainted and fell to the ground. Seeing him fainted and lying flat on the ground, the Queen became grievously hurt and spoke with great compassion. ‘O King! To whom have you done evil that you have fallen into this calamity? Alas! He who is accustomed to sleep in a room adorned with carpets is today like a humble man, sleeping on the ground! The King who gave crores and crores of golden *mohurs* to the Brāhmaṇas, that same King, my husband is lying now on the ground! Alas! What a painful thing! O Fate! What has this King done to You that You have thrown this Indra and Upendra-like King into this dire calamity!’ Thus saying, the beautiful queen of good hips, very much grieved by the sight of her husband’s pain, fell down unconscious on the ground. Then the boy prince, seeing father and mother both senseless and lying on the ground, became very much troubled, and becoming hungry, cried, ‘O Father! O Father! I am very hungry; give me food to eat; O Mother! O Mother! My tongue is being parched; give me food to eat,’ and the boy began to weep repeatedly.

Here ends the Twentieth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the earnestness of Hariścandra to pay off the Dakśiṇā in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXI—the Sorrows of Hariścandra

1-5. Vyāsa said: “O King! At this moment, the Muni Viśvāmitra, endowed with his power of *tapas*, came up there, very angry as if the god of death, to ask of his wealth. Seeing Hariścandra fallen thus senseless on the ground, Viśvāmitra then began to sprinkle water on his body. ‘O King! The man who is involved in a debt, his troubles increase day by day. So get up and pay your promised *dakśiṇā*.’ The King, thus sprinkled with water cold as snow, regained his consciousness; but, seeing Viśvāmitra, he fainted again. At this, the Dvīja Viśvāmitra consoled him and angrily spoke to him thus:

6-10. 'O King! If you want to maintain your steadiness, give then my *dakśiṇā*. Look! It is Truth that makes the Sun shine; It is the Truth that has stationed this Earth in its position; what to speak more, even the Svarga is established on Truth; so the greatest *dharma* lies in Truth. If the fruit of the thousand *aśvamedhas* be held in one pan and Truth be held on the other pan of the balance, then Truth outweighs the thousand horse sacrifices—or what need I to speak all about this? O King! If you fail to give my *dakśiṇā* before sunset, I will no doubt curse you.'

Saying this, Viśvāmitra went away. The King also became very terrified. The wealthless King was pained by the words of the Muni; but he was more troubled with the thought how he would pay him and keep to Truth.

11-13. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! At this time, a Brāhmaṇa skilled in the *Vedas*, with many other Brāhmaṇas, started out of his house at that very place. The queen, then seeing the Brāhmaṇa ascetic close by, addressed the King in words reasonable and in accordance with the *dharma*, 'O Lord! A Brāhmaṇa is considered the father of the other three *varṇas* (Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras) and a son can certainly take the father's things; so it is my intention that you beg your wealth from this Brāhmaṇa.'

14-18. The King said: 'O one of thin waist! To beg suits the Brāhmaṇas; it is prohibited to the Kṣatriyas; I being a Kṣatriya do not wish to take anything as gift. The Brāhmaṇas are the *gurus* of all the *varṇas*. So they are always to be respected. It is not proper to beg from a Brāhmaṇa; especially the Kṣatriyas never ask anything from the Brāhmaṇas; it is totally prohibited. Offering oblations, study, gift and the governing of subjects and protecting those that take refuge is the *dharma* of the Kṣatriyas but they would never, never, ask any other man 'Give, give,' and utter these words indicative of humility. O Devī! The words "I am giving you" are impressed within my heart; so I will earn money from some other source and give that to the Muni.'

19-20. The Queen said: 'O King! Time keeps some men in one and the same state; again it throws others into troubles; Time it is that gives respect to

one and again it is Time that gives disrespect to others. Time it is that makes one a donor and it is the same Time that makes another a beggar. So even the Ṛṣi Viśvāmitra, learned and endowed with the strength of *tapas*, becoming angry has deprived you of your kingdom and happiness, and has thus done quite an irreligious act in the shape of tormenting others. You can now judge in this the wonderful workings of Time.'

21-22. The King said: 'I would rather out off my tongue into two pieces by a sharp sword than I would quit my Kṣatriya pride; and I would never be able to utter the words "Give, give." O fortunate one! I am a Kṣatriya; so I never ask anything of anyone. I always say that, by the strength of my arms, I will earn money and pay off my debt.'

23-27. The Queen said: 'O King! Indra and the other Devas have given me over duly to your hands. So I am your religious (legal) wife; especially I have got education and I ought to be protected. Therefore O luminous one! If you do not like to beg then you can sell me and pay off your *dakśiṇā*.' The King Hariścandra became grieved very much to hear these words and lamented, saying, 'O What a painful thing is this! What a painful thing is this!' His wife again spoke: 'O King! Will we afterwards be burnt by the fire of curse from a Brāhmaṇa and thus lowered very much? So keep my word now. You are selling me, not because that you are infatuated with desire for gambling, nor you are deprived of all knowledge by enjoyments in worldly things, nor you are selling me owing to avert the danger of your kingdom. It is that you are selling me to pay off the debt to your *guru*. So nothing sinful a fault will be incurred by you. So sell me and keep to Truth and the fruits thereof.'

Here ends the Twenty-First Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the description of the sorrows of Hariścandra in the Mahā Purāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXII—the Selling of Hariścandra's wife

1-6. Vyāsa said: "O King! When the Queen Madhavī requested repeatedly the King, he said: "O good auspicious one! When you have not met with any scruple to utter clearly these harsh and cruel words, I will do that act now which the most ruthless persons do not dare to do.' Saying this, the King went with his wife, very distressed, to the city. Placing her on the public road, the King cried out in a voice choked with feelings and eyes full of tears: "O citizens! Hear you all. Do any one of you require any maidservant? This lady is dearer to me than my life. If any of you be able to offer price of her as I will declare, then let him give it out quickly.' The Paṇḍitas then said: 'Who are you? Why are you come here to sell your wife?'

7. The King said: 'Are you asking me of my introduction? Hear then; I am a heartless brute and not fit to be called a man; or I am a Rākṣasa; nay, I am more than that; I am prepared to do this sinful act.'

8-11. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing this, Kauśika suddenly assumed the form of an old man and came out and spoke to Hariścandra: 'I am master of boundless wealth; so I am able to give you the money you want; I am ready to purchase the maidservant by giving an equivalent wealth. Better give me the maidservant. My wife is exceedingly delicate; she is unable to do all the household work; so let me have the maid. But say quickly what value am I to pay?' When the Brāhmaṇa spoke this, Hariścandra felt his heart, as it were, torn asunder; so he could not for the moment speak anything.

12-15. The Brāhmaṇa said: 'Take an equivalent amount of money according to the age, beauty, qualifications and capabilities of your wife and hand her over to me. Hear about the prices of the male and female servants as written in the *dharma-śāstras:* the price of a female servant clever, good, well-qualified and possessing thirty-two auspicious qualities is one *koti* gold *mohurs;* and the male servant similarly qualified fetches one *arbuda* gold *mohurs*.'

Hariścandra became very much pained to hear the Brāhmaṇa speaking thus; but he could not say anything. The Brāhmaṇa then placed in front of the King the money over a bark and caught hold of the hair of the Queen and was ready to drag her.

16-21. The Queen said: 'O *ārya!* Let me see once the lotus-face of my son; leave me once. O Brāhmaṇa! Please see that it will be hard for me again to see this boy. O son! Behold! Your mother is now a slave. So, O Prince, do not touch me. I am not fit now to be touched by you.' The boy, then, seeing the mother suddenly snatched away, cried out, 'O Mother! O Mother!' and followed her with tears in his eyes. That boy tumbled at every step still he caught hold of the mother's clothing by his hand began to accompany her. The Brāhmaṇa, seeing this behavior of the boy, became impatient with anger and began to beat him. Still the boy wept, saying, 'Mother! Mother!' and never quit the hold of his mother. The Queen said: 'O lord! Have mercy on me and purchase this boy also. Though you are purchasing me, yet without this boy I will not be able to do your work. My fate is bad; therefore this calamity has happened. Show this favor to me.'

22-24. The Brāhmaṇa said: 'Take this money and give me the boy too. For the wise in the *dharma-śāstras* fix such to be the prices of a female and a male. The other Paṇḍitas make differences in the prices, e.g., one hundred, one thousand, one *lakh*, one crore and so on, according to the different qualifications. But for the female who is skilled in all actions, modest, of good behavior, and well qualified and, on whose body the thirty-two auspicious signs are seen, her price is one *koti* gold *mohurs* and for a man qualified, one *arbuda* gold *mohurs*.'

25-35. Sūta said: "O King! The Brāhmaṇa then gave over the price of the boy as decided, in gold *mohurs* in front of the King over a bark and then tied both the mother and son. He, then, gladly and without any delay, carried them to his home. At the time of departure, the Queen circumambulated the King and, kneeling down, bowed down to him and, in that state of humility, began to speak: 'If ever I have done any charities, if

ever I have poured oblations on the sacred fire, if ever I have satisfied the Brāhmaṇas, then, by that virtue, Hariścandra will again be my husband.'

Seeing his wife, dearer then his life, fallen on his feet, the King became very distracted and lamented, crying, 'Alas! Alas! The shadow of a tree never leaves the tree; but you being verily modest and endowed with all qualifications, are now separated from me.' Speaking thus reasonably with his wife, the King said to his son: 'O child! Where will you go, leaving me here? Where shall I go now? and who will stop my miseries?' The King, then, spoke to the Brāhmaṇa: 'O Brāhmaṇa! The pain that I experience in the separation from my son, I did not feel on the occasion of quitting my kingdom or on my being exiled in a forest. O auspicious one! The husband, good natured in this world, nourishes always his wife and keeps her always in comfort and happiness. But I am such a bad husband of yours, as I have left you and made you float in the sea of sorrows. Born in the Ikṣvāku family, I inherited the kingdom and its pleasures; but, Alas! Your getting such a husband has now been reduced to slavery! O Devī! I am merged in this ocean of sorrows and troubles. Who will rescue me, by narrating this story of the *Purāṇas!'*

36-40. Sūta said: "O King! The Brāhmaṇa, then, began to take away the queen and the boy, whipping them, in the face of the King. Seeing his wife and son being dragged away in that state, the King's pain knew no bounds and be frequently sighed and sighed and bitterly wept aloud. 'Alas! My dear wife, whom the Moon, the Sun, Wind or any other body could not see ere this, has become now reduced to slavery today! Oh! How beautiful and gentle are the fingers of my child? He has been sold off today, being born in the Solar Dynasty? Alas! Fie on my foolish understanding! Oh my Dear! Oh my child Rohitāśva! Your this wretched condition is due to my *anārya* irrespectable bad maxims! Oh! Through the mockery of the Daiva, I have got this distress! Fie on Me!'

41-42 Vyāsa said: "The King was lamenting thus when the Brāhmaṇa disappeared with them, in the very tall trees and walls of palatial

buildings. At this time the cruel fiendish Muni, endowed with great power of asceticism came there quickly, accompanied by his disciples.

43. Viśvāmitra said: 'O One of mighty arm! If you think it your duty to respect Truth, then pay me the *dakśiṇā* of the Rājasūya sacrifice that you promised before.'

44. Hariścandra said: 'O Rājarsi! I bow down to thee. O sinless one! Now take the *dakśiṇā* of the Rājasūya Sacrifice that I promised to pay you before.'

45. Viśvāmitra said: 'O King! Whence have you collected these gold *mohurs* that you are now paying me as my *dakśiṇā?* How have you earned this? Say.'

46. Hariścandra said: 'O Dvīja! O sinless one! What use is there in telling this to you. It will increase agony by hearing? O one of good vows!'

47. Viśvāmitra said: 'I won't accept money earned not rightly. Give what you have acquired by rightful means. Say truly how you have acquired it.'

48. Hariścandra spoke: 'O Brāhmaṇa! I have sold my wife the Devī Madhavī for one *koti* gold mohurs and my son for ten *kotis* of gold *mohurs*. So take this eleven *koti* gold *mohurs* from me.'

49. Sūta said: "Seeing the gold collected out of the sale of wife and son very small, and seeing the King overpowered with pain and sorrow, Kauśika angrily spoke:

50-52. "O King! The *dakśiṇā* of the Rājasūya Sacrifice cannot be so small; so collect quickly other money to complete it. O vilest of Kṣatriyas! If you think this much to be proper for me, see first the enormous power of mine that I possess of my *tapasyā*, practiced duly, of my pure Brāhmaṇahood, of my violent power and of my chaste study and then you can pay my *dakśiṇā*.

53. Hariścandra said: 'O Bhagavān! I have sold just now my wife; and so wait for some time and I will collect more gold and will pay that to you.'

54. Viśvāmitra said: 'O King! The fourth part of the day is now remaining; I will wait until then. After this you won't expect any other reply from me.'

Here ends the Twenty second Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the selling of Hariścandra's wife in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIII—King Hariścandra acknowledges the slavery of the Caṇḍāla

1-5. Vyāsa said: "O King! Speaking these harsh and cruel words to the King, the Muni took that money and went away. When Viśvāmitra went away, the King Hariścandra became very much perplexed with sorrows and sighed frequently. He then began to say with his face bent downwards. 'Suffering from constant pain and troubles, I am now turned into a *preta;* if anybody finds me serviceable, he may purchase me with value in gold as proper; but he should do this quickly before the sun sets.' Dharma, then, assuming the form of a heartless *caṇḍāla*, came there quickly to test Hariścandra. The body of that low mean person was of a black color, his air looking ferocious, his belly elongated, body emitting stench odors, teeth very long, and his face covered with beards. He had one bamboo in his hand; in his neck, the bones of the dead were hanging and his chest was very distorted.

6. The *caṇḍāla* said: 'I am in urgent need of a servant; I will keep you as my slave; say, then, quickly what is your price?'

7. Vyāsa said: "O King! When the cruel, extremely ferocious and heartless *caṇḍāla* said thus, the King Hariścandra was surprised to see his appearance and said: 'Who are you?'

8-12. The Caṇḍāla said: 'O King! I am the famous *caṇḍāla* Pravīra; you will have to remain always subject to me and to collect the clothes of the dead persons.' Hearing his word, the King said, 'I want to be purchased by a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya. See! The sages say that the *dharma* of good people

is excellent; the *dharma* of the persons intermediate is middling; and the *dharma* of the mean is depressing. You belong to the low and mean class. So my *dharma* cannot be observed if I remain in your house.' The *caṇḍāla* said: 'O King! This is the *dharma* of yours now mentioned by you; then why did you mention that anybody can purchase you? Without any previous consideration, you spoke before me. He who speaks with preconsideration attains his desired object; but, O sinless one! You did not consider and you spoke that ordinarily. However, if I take your words that you spoke first to be true, then you are no doubt, purchased by me.'

13. Hariścandra said: 'The villain that speaks untruth, goes downright to a terrible hell; so to become a *caṇḍāla* is far better for me than to use an untrue word.'

14-15. Vyāsa said: 'O King! When the King was speaking thus, the ascetic Viśvāmitra arrived there out of anger and impatience; he rolled his eyes and said: This *caṇḍāla* is come to give you your desired money; why, then, are you not giving me the remnant of my *dakśiṇā?*

16. Hariścandra said: 'O Kauśika! Nothing is unknown to you. This my body is born from the Solar Line; how then can I accept this slavery of a *caṇḍāla?'*

17-20. Viśvāmitra said: 'If you do not sell yourself to a *caṇḍāla*, be certain that I will just now put you under my curse. Give me immediately my *dakśiṇā*, whether from a *caṇḍāla* or from a Brāhmaṇa. There is no other purchaser at present than this *caṇḍāla*. But know this as certain that I won't go back until I get my money. O King! If you do not give me money just now, then when half the *ghatikā* of the day is remaining, I will burn you up by my fire of anger.'

2l. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing these words of Viśvāmitra, the King became almost dead; bewildered with fear, then he clasped the feet of the Ṛṣi and said, 'Be friendly, please.'

22-23. Hariścandra said: 'O Viprarsi! I am now very humiliated and have become very afflicted and distressed. Especially I am your *bhakta*, I am your servant; so be graciously pleased and free me from this painful companion of a *caṇḍāla*. O Muni! In lieu of my remnant *dakśiṇā*, I will be your obedient slave; I will do your work and follow your commands.'

24. Visvamitra said: 'O King! You are then my slave, you will obey always my commands.'

25-26. Vyāsa said: "O King! When Viśvāmitra said so, the King, out of joy, thought that he regained his life and said to Kauśika, 'Always I will obey your words; now order me what work I will have to do.'

27-28. Viśvāmitra then addressed the *caṇḍāla* and said: "O *caṇḍāla!* Come to me and give me the price for this slave. I am now handing this slave over to you; give me the price and take him. I want money; I have no need for a servant.'

29. Vyāsa said: "O King! When Viśvāmitra spoke thus, the *caṇḍāla* overflowed with joy, came immediately to the Ṛṣi Viśvāmitra and said:

30. 'O Dvīja! The relief that you have given me by selling this servant, for that I will give you the ten *yojanas* wide land of Prayāga Maṇḍalam, covered over with jewels.'

31-36. Vyāsa said: "O King! The *caṇḍāla* then gave one thousand gems, one thousand jewels, one thousand pearls and one thousand gold *mohurs* and Viśvāmitra took them. No signs of distraction nor unpleasantness were visible on the face of the King Hariścandra. Rather he laid hold of his patience and thought within himself, 'Viśvāmitra is now my master; I will do any work that he puts me in.' At this time, the incorporeal voice, the voice of the fourth dimensional space, sounded from the Heavens: 'O Fortunate One! You are freed from the *dakśiṇā*, the debt before that you promised to give me.' A shower of flowers fell on the head of the King from the Heavens. At this time the powerful Indra and the other hosts of the Devas praised the King, saying: 'Sādhu! Sādhu! Well-done, Well-done.' The

heart of the King was then filled with intense joy and the King then said to Kauśika:

37-38. 'O Intelligent One! You are a greater benefactor to me than my father, mother and friend as you have freed me in a moment from my debts. So, O mighty-armed one! Your words are beneficial to me. Now order what am I to do.'

39. When the King said so, Viśvāmitra then said: 'Go and observe from today the words of the *caṇḍāla*. Let good befall you!' Thus saying, the Mahārṣi Viśvāmitra took the money given by the *caṇḍāla* and went away to his own place.

Here ends the Twenty-third Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the King Hariścandra's acknowledging of the slavery of the Caṇḍāla in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIV—the Stay of Hariścandra in the Burning Ground

1. Śaunaka said: "O Sūta! Now describe as quickly as you can in detail what the King Hariścandra did afterwards in the house of the *caṇḍāla*."

2-14. Sūta said: "When Viśvāmitra went away, the mind of the *caṇḍāla* was filled with joy. He already gave to Viśvāmitra that amount of jewels; so he tied now the King and, telling him, 'Do you now stand on the path of falsehood?' And began to beat him with sticks. The King was already very much tired of the bereavements from his dear ones; now being beaten by the *caṇḍāla*, his senses were lost. In this state the *caṇḍāla* took him to his house and fastened him with a chain. Then the *caṇḍāla's* troubles were over and he fell asleep. The King lived in the *caṇḍāla's* house in that state fettered by a chain; but he did not take any food there. Incessantly he wept for his wife and son and others. 'Alas! That thin lady, seeing the sad face of her son is now remembering me with a morose face. She is now perhaps thinking, with a grieved heart, that whenever the King will get the money,

he will pay off the promised money to the Brāhmaṇa and then will free us from this yoke of slavery. Alas! When will that day come when will he see me and this crying child and speak with us. When the son will cry, saying, "I will go to my father; father!" When will he come and speak with the child? That fawn-eyed gentle woman does not know that I am now placed under a *caṇḍāla*. Alas! I am deprived of my kingdom, friends; and I have sold away my wife and son; now I am bound in the chain of slavery of a *caṇḍāla*. Alas! So many miseries have fallen on me all one after another.' Thus thinking incessantly about his dear consort and son, the King passed his days in the house of that *caṇḍāla*. Four days passed; and on the fifth day the *caṇḍāla* came there, rebuked the King with very harsh words, freed him from his fastenings and said, 'Go to the burial ground and collect the clothings of the dead bodies. There is a wide *śmasān* (burial ground) on the southern part of Kāśī; go and protect that and whatever is due to you, justly take that; do not leave it. Take this *Jarjara* club and go there quickly. Say to all that you are the messenger of Vīravāhu and this staff is his.'

15-33. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! Thus Hariścandra became a *caṇḍāla's* servant and was engaged in collecting the cloths of the dead persons. Thus ordered by the *caṇḍāla*, whose duty was to collect the rags of the dead bodies, the King went to the burial ground. To the south of the city Kāśī, was situated the dreadful *śmasāna*, scattered over with the garlands of the dead, bad odors were emitting on all sides and it was covered all over with smoke. Hundreds of jackals were yelling there and the ground was being reverberated by their yells. Vultures, jackals and dogs were at many places dragging the dead bodies. At other places were scattered heaps of bones; the whole ground was covered with the putrid smell of the dead. At some places it seemed that from within the funeral pyre, the half-burnt dead bodies were laughing wildly with their teeth wide open from their mouths. Thus the dead bodies looked terrible when being placed in the fire. Lots of dead bodies were brought there and there was a great tumultuous uproar made by the cries of their friends and relatives. 'Oh! My son! My friend! My relative! My brother! My child! My dear wife! Oh! My cousin! Oh! My

grandfather! Oh! My father! My grandson! My acquaintance! Where hast thou gone leaving me here! Come once and let me have a sight of thee!'

With such dreadful sounds as these, the burial ground was being echoed. Flesh, marrow, fat all were being burnt in the fire and a peculiar sound 'Son, Son' was being produced there and creating voidness in the minds of the people. The fire was burning with a crackling noise. Thus the *śmasāna* looked very terrible, as if the universe was being destroyed at the end of a *kalpa*. King Hariścandra arrived there; and, with extreme pain, he began to give vent to his sorrows. 'My ministers, servants! Where are you all now? Where is kingdom that I got by a succession of inheritance! O my son! O my dear wife! Where are you staying now, at what a long distance, leaving me here out of the Brāhmaṇa's anger? Without *dharma* man can never get auspicious fruits. So men should carefully earn *dharma*.'

The King, whose body was covered with dust and dirt, thought thus repeatedly; and at last, remembering the *caṇḍāla's* words, went out in quest of the dead. Out of this eventful cares and anxieties, his body became lean like a stick; still he ran, to and fro, and calculated thus: 'This dead body will fetch for its price one hundred gold *mohurs;* out of this, this belongs to the King; this to me, and this to the *caṇḍāla*.' So he thought constantly and his state became awful. His face, arm, belly, feet and the other parts of body were all covered over with ashes and dust; the King wore a ragged cloth where hundred places were sewn over; his toes were all besmeared with all sorts of flesh, marrow, fat and other things. He began to satisfy his hunger out of the food that was prepared for all sorts of dead bodies; and taking their garlands, he encircled his head with them. Day and night he did not sleep and always he sighed and sighed, crying, 'Alas! Alas!' Thus one year passed away, as if it had been three hundred years.

Here ends the Twenty-fourth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the stay of Hariścandra in the burning ground in the Mahā Purāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXV—the Quarrels between Hariścandra and Viśvāmitra

1-12. Sūta said: "Here, on the other hand, one day the boy Rohitāśva went out with other boys to play at some place close to Kāśī. He first played with the his comrades; he then began to root out and collect, as far as he could, the *darbha* (*kuśa*) grass, with its ends and which had not deep roots. On being questioned why he was taking the *dharba* grass, Rohitā told his comrades that his master was a Brāhmaṇa and that he was collecting them for his satisfaction. Saying this, he began to collect carefully by his hands the sacrificial fuel (*samidha*) and other fuel for burning purposes. He collected the Palāsa wood for *homa*, and making it into a bundle with other articles already collected, took it on his head, but at every step he seemed to be fatigued. Feeling thirsty he went to a pool of water close by and keeping his load on the ground went down to drink water. Drinking water he rested a while and then as he had kept his load on the anthill, be began to take it back on his head, a very poisonous deadly serpent came out suddenly out of that anthill at the order of Viśvāmitra. The snake immediately bit the boy who instantly fell down and died. His comrades seeing Rohitāśva dead went to the house of the Brāhmaṇa. With much anxiety the boys went soon out of fear, to his mother and said: 'O Brāhmaṇa's maidservant! Your son went out with us to play outside; but suddenly a poisonous snake bit him and he is dead.' Rohitā's mother, hearing these cruel words like thunder and lightning at once fell down on the ground like a plantain tree cut off from its roots. The Brāhmaṇa then came and sprinkled water on her face. When she regained her consciousness, the Brāhmaṇa then angrily spoke:

13-19. 'O wicked one! It is very inauspicious to cry at the evening time; especially the disfavor of the Goddess Lakṣmī; poverty comes to the householder, you know this; why are you then weeping? Have you not a bit of shame in your heart? She made no reply at this. Rather very much immersed in grief for her son, she wept in a pitiful voice. Her body was covered with dust, hairs were dishevelled and her face covered all over

with tears from eyes. She constantly wept out of sorrow. The Brāhmaṇa, then, became very angry and spoke to the queen: 'O villain! O wicked! Fie on you. I have bought you for money; yet you are hindering my luck. If you had this thought that you would not work under me, why did you take for nothing my money?'

Thus repeatedly scolded by the Brāhmaṇa, she pitifully cried and spoke to the Brāhmaṇa in a voice choked with feelings: 'O Lord! My son has fallen into the jaws of death, being smitten by a serpent. O one of good vows! I will never be able to see him. So kindly permit me to go and see my boy.' Saying thus, that lady began again to weep in a pitiful voice. The Brāhmaṇa became very angry and spoke thus:

20-26. 'O cheat! Your conduct is extremely blameable; you do not know how one commits a sin. The man who taking his pay from his master spoils his master's work, he goes to the terrible hell Raurava and is scorched there. Living in Hell for a short while, he is born as a cock. Or it is useless for me to give you this instruction of the *dharma-śāstra*, for to speak to such to an illiterate, cruel, low, hypocrite and liar and to one addicted to sinful acts is to sow seed on an *usar* land to see it fruitless. Now if you have any fear for the afterlife, come and do the household affairs.'

Hearing this, she said to the Brāhmaṇa, trembling: 'O Lord! Be graciously pleased and show your mercy on a maidservant. Only for a moment I will go to see the dead son of mine; so give me order to go there for a moment.' That lady was deeply absorbed with sorrows for her son; then she put her head on the feet of the Brāhmaṇa and with a pitiful voice cried. The angry Brāhmaṇa with eyes reddened then began to speak.

27-41. 'What purpose of mine will be served by your son? Don't you know about my anger? Have you forgotten about my whipping? So be ready and do my household work without any delay.' Hearing his words, the queen held her patience and began to do the household work. She spent half the night time, when she finished shampooing his feet. When this was over, the Brāhmaṇa spoke to her: 'You can go now to your son; but see, finish his

burning ceremonies and come back quickly. See that my morning works do not suffer.' Thus getting the permission, the Queen went at that dead of night to look for her son, alone and weeping. Gradually she went out of the precincts of the city of Kāsī and there she saw her son like a poor man's son, lying on the ground over leaves and pieces of woods. Seeing her son dead, the humble Queen was very troubled with sorrow, like an antelope straying from its herd and as a cow missing her calf. The Queen Mādhavī then began to lament, in a very pitiful tone, thus: 'O my son! Come once before me; say why you are angry. Oh! My child! You used to come frequently to me, uttering "Mā! Mā!" Then why are you not coming now?' Saying thus, she tumbling went and fell over his son. Regaining her consciousness, she embraced her son and placing her face on the face of the child began to weep pitifully. 'Oh! My son! Oh! My child! Oh my *kumāra!* Oh! My beautiful!' and began to beat her head and her breast with her hands. 'O King! Where are you now? You used to look upon your son dearer than even your life. Your that son is now lying dead on the ground. Come and behold him once. It seems that the son has got back his life.' Thus thinking she looked upon his face; but when it looked dead, she fell immediately unconscious. Getting back soon her consciousness, she held his face by her hands and said: 'O child! Rise up from your sleep; awake; now is the dreadful night time; hundreds of jackals are yelling into our ears. Even Pretas, Bhutas, Piśāchas and Dākinīs are roaming in packs and making terrible sounds "Hum, Hum." Your comrades returned to their homes just at sunset; Why are you alone remaining here?'

42-56. Sūta said: "The thin-bodied queen, thus saying, began to lament, 'Oh my child! Oh! My son, Oh! Rohitāśva, O *kumāra*, why are you not replying to my words? Oh my child! I am your mother; do you not recognize me? Look at me once. O child! I am deprived of my kingdom and exiled from my country; my husband has sold even his body and I am myself reduced to slavery. What man is there that can live in this state? I am living simply by seeing your lotus face. The astrologer who cast your horoscope at your birth, calculated future events in your life; but where? none of them is fructified. They said, "This child will be a hero, warrior, long-lived, very

charitable man, and always ready to do the worship of the Devas, Dvījas and the Gurus. What more than this that the child will be one paramount sovereign and with his sons and grandsons will enjoy his kingdom. This boy will be the master of his senses and will fulfil the desires of his father and mother." Oh my son! Now all those predictions have turned out false. O child! You have on your palms so many auspicious signs, discus, fishes, umbrella, Śrī Vatsa, Svastika, flags, Kalaśa (earthen jar), *cāmara* and other signs; besides these, various other auspicious omens exist on your hands. Are all these become in vain today? O son! You are the lord of this whole dominion; but where are your Kingdom now, those ministers, that royal throne, that umbrella, that axe, that vast amount of riches, that Ayodhyā city, those palatial buildings, those elephants, horses, and chariots? Where have gone your subjects? O child! Where have you gone now, quitting all these and even me! O beloved husband! See the condition of your son who in his early childhood used to move on all fours and get up on your broad chest, anointed with *kunkum*, and spoil it with dust; O King! Come once and witness the condition of your child who used to press, out of ignorance due to his young age, the *tilak* on your forehead, prepared of Mriganābhi, (musk). Alas! Flies are now sitting on the lotus face today which I used to kiss over, covered with dirt; the insects are now stinging that. Oh! This I have got to witness now! O King! Come and see once your child is now sleeping on the ground like a poor man's dead son. O Fate! What bad act did I commit in my past life, that I have got to suffer so much in this life and I do not get an end of them? O child! O son! Oh, my *kumāra!* Oh! My beautiful! Shall I not be able to see you once any more elsewhere?' Queen Mādhavī thus lamented very much when the warders of the city, hearing her lamentations awoke and came to her without any delay, greatly astonished. They asked her thus:

57-77. 'Who are you? Whose son is this? Where is your husband? Why are you weeping here in this dead of night, without any fear?' Though thus questioned, the thin Queen did not reply anything. Being again asked, she remained silent; and in the next moment she was pained with extreme agony and began again to cry. Tears flowed incessantly from her two eyes

out of her sorrow. The guards then began to suspect her and were greatly afraid. So much that hairs stood on their ends out of terror. They at once raised their arms and began to talk with each other. 'When this lady is not giving any sort of reply, she is then certainly not a woman; most probably she will be a Rākṣasī, knowing magic and destroying young children. So she should be killed with great attention. If she be not a Rākṣasī, then why she should stay in this dead of night outside the city? No doubt, this Rākṣasī has brought someone's child to eat here.' Thus saying, they, without any delay, tied her hairs closely and some caught hold of her hand some caught hold of her neck, saying 'O Rākṣasī! where will you go now?' The armed men then dragged her perforce to the house of the *caṇḍāla* and handed her over to him. All the people said: 'O Chief of the *caṇḍālas!* We have caught today outside the city this child-eating Rākṣasī; so you better take her quickly on the slaughter ground and slaughter her.'

The Caṇḍāla looked at her body and said, 'This Rākṣasī is widely celebrated in this world. I know her from before; but nobody is able to see her. This Māyāvinī has devoured many sons of many persons. You all will acquire great merit when she will be slaughtered and your good name will be known to all and will last long. You better now go back to your own homes. The man who kills women, children, cows and Brāhmaṇas, who burns another's house with fire, who destroys the wayfares of others, who steals his *guru's* wife, who quarrels with saintly persons, and who drinks wine, if killed, will certainly yield merits to the man who kills him. If such a one be a female or a Brāhmaṇa, no sin will accrue if he or she be slaughtered. So it is my paramount duty to kill her.' Saying this, the Caṇḍāla tied her closely and drawing her by her hairs, began to beat her with a rope. Then he told to Hariścandra in terse language: 'O slave! Kill her; this woman is by her very nature wicked; so do not judge anything in this matter of killing her.' Hearing these harsh words, like the falling of a thunderbolt, the King shuddered. When he came back to his nature, he fearing lest a woman be killed, said to the *caṇḍāla:* 'I am not at all able to carry this order out; so kindly make over this task to some other servant of

yours. He will kill her. I will certainly carry out any other order that you would task me to do.'

Thus hearing the King, the *caṇḍāla* said: 'Discard your fear and take the sword; this Māyāvinī kills always the children; so to kill her is meritorious; in no way whatsoever ought she to be saved.' The King became very sorry and said: 'Women should always be protected with care, never to be killed; the more so as the religious Munis have assigned greater sin in the killing of women. The man who kills consciously or unconsciously females, certainly becomes boiled in the Mahā Raurava hell.'

78-79. The *caṇḍāla* said: 'Don't you say this; take this sharp sword, lustrous like a lightning; where killing one engenders happiness to many, abundance of merits are acquired in doing that. This wicked fellow has eaten many children of this place; so kill her as early as possible and bring peace and happiness to the Kāsī people.'

80. The King said: 'O Chief of the *caṇḍālas!* I have taken the difficult vow from my childhood, not to kill any woman. Therefore I cannot exert myself in this matter of killing the woman as you order.'

81-82. The *caṇḍāla* said: "O wicked fellow! No work is superior which is not the master's work. Why then are you cancelling today to carry out my order, when you are taking pay from me? The servant that spoils his master's work, taking his money, is not freed from the hell even if he remains there for ten thousand years.'

83-86. The King said: 'O Lord of the Caṇḍālas! Put me to some other task that is very difficult. I will do that easily. Or if you have an enemy, specify and I will kill him no doubt within an instant. I will give you the whole earth by killing him. Even if Indra comes against you with the other Devas, or Dānavas, or Uragas, or Kinnaras, or Siddhas, or Gandharvas, I will slay him with my sharpened arrows, but I will never be able to kill a woman.' The *caṇḍāla*, then, began to tremble with anger at these words and said to the King:

87-89. 'You are a servant and what you have spoken is not fit for a servant. Working as a slave of a *caṇḍāla*, you are speaking the words of the gods. Therefore, O slave! hear now what I say; no need of exchanging any further words. O shameless one! If you fear sin a bit why then did you accept the slavery in a *caṇḍāla's* house? Take this sword and cut off her head!' Thus speaking the Caṇḍāla gave him the axe.

Here ends the Twenty-fifth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the quarrels between Hariścandra and Viśvāmitra in the Mahā Purāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXVI—Narration of the Sorrows of Hariścandra

1-3. Sūta said: "King Hariścandra with his face bent low thus said to the Queen: 'O young one! I am a great sinner, otherwise why shall I be ready to do this heinous act? However now sit before me. If my hand be capable to kill you, then it will cut off your head.' Thus saying, the King took the axe and moved forward to cut her. As the King did not recognize her as his Queen, so the Queen did not recognize him as her husband, the King. So the Queen, being very much strained with sorrow, began to utter with a view to court her death.

4-16. 'O *caṇḍāla*! If you like, I say something; hear my son is dead and is lying close to the outskirts of the city. Wait until I bring my child before you and do his burning ceremonies. Next you can cut me off by your axe.' The King said: 'Very well; let that be,' and gave her permission to go to her dead son. Then the Queen, emaciated and pale, her body being covered all over with dust, arrived at the burning ground and taking her dead son, bitten by a serpent, on her lap cried out loudly 'O son! O my child! O my young son!' and referring to her husband said: 'O King! See, today, the sad condition of your son, lying on the ground as his bed. My son went to play with other boys and, bitten by a cruel poisonous serpent, left his life.' Hearing the pitiful cry of that helpless woman, King Hariścandra went to the dead and took off the cover of his face. Due to the long exile and the

difficulties thereof, the Queen was changed altogether in her outer form, so the King could not recognize her weeping as his wife. On the other hand the King, too, had not the curled hair on his head as before; it has turned into matted hair and his skin especially has become like the bark of a dried tree; so the Queen could not make out the King also. The King then noticed all the king-making auspicious signs on the several limbs of that dead boy, poisoned all over and lying on the ground and began to think thus: 'The face of the child is very beautiful like the Full Moon, nowhere there is any scar nor anything like this; the nose is high; the two cheeks are clean like a mirror and spacious; the hairs are blue, curling, similar, long and waving, the two eyes are widely expanded like a full-blown lotus, the two lips are red like *bimba* fruits; the chest is wide and spacious, the eyes are stretched up to the ears; the arms are extending up to the knees; the shoulders are elevated; the legs are elongated, yet god-like like a lotus stem; the appearance is grave, the fingers are fine, yet strong enough to hold the world; the navel is deep and the region of the shoulders elevated. Certainly this boy was born in a royal family. Alas! What a pain is this! The cruel Death has reduced him to this state!'

17-21. Sūta said: "Thus looking carefully that boy in the lap of his mother from his head to foot, the King Hariścandra got back to his ancient recollections. He recognized the boy to be his and wept aloud repeating the words 'Oh! Oh!' The tears flowed from his eyes and he said: 'This is my boy that has been reduced to this state! Oh! The cruel Fate!' Though the boy is dead, yet the King remained bewildered for a moment. The queen then spoke out of terrible pain: 'O child! What sin is that which has caused this dire calamity, I cannot imagine!

22-27. O my Husband! O King! I am extremely worried of pains and troubles; leaving me thus, how is it and where you are passing away your time in a calm, quiet state! O Fortune! It is You that has brought about the loss of the Rājarsi Hariścandra's dominion, the separation from his friends and what more, you have caused his wife and son to be sold! Has he done so much mischief to you?' Hearing her cries, the King's patience gave way

and he came to recognize the Devī and the son and exclaimed, 'She is my wife and the dead boy is my son. Oh! What a series of troubles, one coming after another.' Being overpowered with extreme trouble and pain, the King fell unconscious on the ground; the Queen, too, looking at the King's state, fell motionless, and void of senses, no sooner she recognized him as King Hariścandra. Some time after, the King and Queen both got back at the same time their consciousness and with great sorrow and agony, began to lament.

28-49. The King said: 'O child! Why my heart does not rend to thousand pieces, seeing today your gentle face pale and lifeless, that was once beautiful with curls of hairs? O Rohitā! When will you come to me saying in a sweet voice, "Father! Father!" When shall I address you affectionately, "Oh my child! Oh my child!" embracing you within my breast! Whose tawny colored dust on his knees will spoil my clothes, lap and my body! O delightful son! I have sold you as if an ordinary thing, though I am your father. As yet my pleasure of having a son is not satisfied. Owing to the mockery of the mean Fate, my unbounded kingdom, friends, and abundance of riches all have vanished away! Finally I had one son, and that too is now in the jaws of death! Oh! With what an amount of terrible pain I am being burnt up today when I am seeing the lotus face of my son, smitten by a serpent and lying dead on the ground!'

Thus speaking in a voice choked with feelings and with tears in his eyes, as soon as he was going to take his boy in his lap, he fell senseless on the ground. Seeing the King lying on the ground, Śaivyā thus thought: 'Such is his voice as makes me certain that he is the King Hariścandra, the best of men and the delighter of the learned men's hearts. His teeth are like those of the famous Hariścandra just like to Mukul and his nose is elevated and soft like the *tila* flower. But if he be Hariścandra, how is it that he has come to this burning ground?' Thus thinking, while she looked at the King, leaving for the moment the sorrow for his son, joy, pain and surprise attacked her heart simultaneously; and she, in that state, fell down unconscious on the ground. Then gradually regaining consciousness, she

spoke in a pitiful voice: 'O Fortune! You have caused to the King who was once like an Immortal, the loss of his kingdom, friends, and even the sale of his wife and son. And now you have transformed him into a *caṇḍāla!* You are merciless, religionless, void of any justice as to what is just and what is unjust. You are shameless. So fie on you! O King! Where are gone today that royal umbrella, that throne, that *cāmara* and that pair of fans on your both sides! Oh! What is this transformation caused by the Vidhātā, the Ordainer of Fate? When the high-souled King used to travel, all the kings used to remove as His servants the dust of the roads by their clothings! Oh! Is he the same King of Kings, Hariścandra who is roaming in this unholy burning ground, burdened too much by his load of sufferings? Oh! Innumerable human skulls are lying here; the small earthen pots brought for the purification of the bodies of the dead are lying scattered close to each; the garlands of flowers for the dead, being intertwined with the hairs of the dead, are presenting a grim spectacle! The ashes, charcoal, half-burnt dead bodies, bones, and marrow all arranged one over another make the place more hideous. The marrow of the dead bodies have come out and are dried up by the sun. At places, vultures and *śakunīs* are crying hideously and the crows and other birds, eager to eat flesh, are roaming to and fro. All the quarters of the sky are looking blue with the smoke arising out of the burning of the dead. The Rākṣasas are constantly roaming hither and thither, gladly feasting on the human flesh. Is the King passing his days thus in this place? Alas! Oh! What a painful thing is this!' The daughter of the King, Śaivyā, was overpowered with an awful sorrow; and clasping the neck of the King, began to lament again, in a pitiful voice. 'O King! You have spoken that you are a *caṇḍāla*. Is this a dream? Or a reality? O King! If it be true that you are a slave of the *caṇḍāla*, then say to me; my mind is being deluded very much! I cannot indulge this idea. O knower of *dharma!* You have shown your great zeal towards *dharma;* and, for that reason, you are displaced from your royal throne! Now if such help comes out of worshipping the Brāhmaṇas and the Devas, then *dharma* cannot stand, along with it, the truth, simplicity and harmlessness cannot exist.'

50-55. Sūta said: “Hearing these words from the thin Śaivyā, the King took a heavy sigh and then described to her in detail with tears flowing on his neck, how he got the *caṇḍāla* state. The fearful Queen became very much pained to hear all this and heaving a deep sigh, described, as it was, how her son died. On hearing this, the King fainted and fell unconscious on the ground. Then regaining gradually his consciousness, he began to kiss, with his tongue, the face of his dead son. Śaivyā then said in a choked voice: ‘Now sever off my head and obey your master’s word. O King! You will be saved then as having kept your truth; and your master’s order would be carried out.’ Hearing this, the King fainted and fell down senseless. Getting up conscious in a moment, he began to weep bitterly.

56. The King said: ‘O beloved! How have you uttered such cruel words? How can I execute that which is hard even to utter?’

57-58. Śaivyā said: ‘O Lord! I have worshipped the Devī Gaurī and other Devas and the Brāhmaṇas; so, with their mercy, I will get you as my husband in my future birth.’ Hearing this, the King again fell down instantly on the ground; getting up immediately, he was overpowered with sorrow and began to kiss the face of the dead son.

59-71. The King said: ‘O dear! I won’t be able to suffer any longer for a long time. But, O thin-bodied one! See, I am so very unfortunate that I have no command even over my heart. If I enter into the fire without the permission of the *caṇḍāla*, then I will have to become again the slave of a *caṇḍāla* in my future birth. Think it over. After that I will have to go to the hell and be tormented there. But this too I find beneficial to me. Rather I will go to the hell Mahā-Raurava and there suffer for a long time the torments of the hell, yet I do not like to live a little longer when my boy, the continuer of my family, has left his life out of the queer fancies of the Great Time and I be merged in the sorrows for my son. My body is now at the command of the *caṇḍāla*. How can I in this state quit my life without his permission? If I leave my body, I will be indebted to him and I will have to suffer in hell. Let this be so; still I will leave off my body, the receptacle of all these pains and troubles. Nowhere in the *triloki* is any pain like that felt

in the demise of a son, not in crossing the Vaitaranī nor in the Asipatravanam! So I will now throw myself on the burning fire along with the dead body of my son. So, O thin-bodied one! You should now excuse me; do not prevent me. O sweet-smiling one! I now permit you to go back to the house of the Brāhmaṇa. If ever I have given in charity riches, offered oblation to the fire, and given satisfaction to my superiors then, in the other world, I will get you and my son. But there is no such chance now in this world. O sweet-smiling one! If ever I had given you offense while conversing or making jokes with you, now at the time of my parting, excuse them all. O auspicious one! Never despise the Brāhmaṇa out of your pride as a Queen. Look on your master as a Deva and try all your best to satisfy him.'

72-73. The Queen said: 'O Rājarsi! I will also throw myself on the burning fire. O Deva! I will not be able to carry on this burden, so I will accompany you. It is better for me to accompany you; so there will not be otherwise. O giver of honor! I will enjoy with you heaven or suffer with you in hell." Hearing this, the King said: 'O chaste one! Do as you please.'

Here ends the Twenty-sixth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the narration of the sorrows of Hariścandra in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXVII—Hariścandra goes to the Heavens

1-7. Sūta said: "The King Hariścandra then prepared the funeral pyre and placed his son on it. Next he and his wife with folded palms merged themselves in the meditation of the Parameśvarī, the Lady of of the Universe. That Hundred-eyed One is reigning within these five *koṣas* or sheaths: Annamaya, etc. She resides in the sacral plexus of the nature of Brāhman, the Puruṣa composed of *anna* and *rasa*. And She is the Ocean of Mercy. Wearing the red robe, She is ever ready with various weapons in Her hands for the preservation of the Universe. When the King was

engaged thus in meditating on Her, Indra and all the Devas with Dharma in their front came to the King Hariścandra with no delay.

They all coming up said to the King: 'O King! Hear. I am the Grandsire and here are present Dharma Himself, Bhagavān Viṣṇu, the Sādhyas, Viśvadevās, Maruts, the Lokapālas, the Chāranas, the Nāgas, the Gandharvas, Siddhas, Rudras, the twin Aśvins, and all the other Devas and Viśvāmitra himself. Viśvāmitra, who going ever the three worlds wishes to make friendship according to the law ordained by *dharma*, is now himself desirous to grant you your desired objects."

8. Dharma said: 'O King! Do not risk such an hazardous undertaking. I am Dharma; I am satisfied with your patience and forbearance, control of your senses, and the other *sāttvik* qualities, and have therefore come to you.'

9-10. Indra said: 'O Hariścandra! I have also come to you. So your good fortune knows no bounds today. You with your wife and son have conquered the Eternal World. O King! What is hardly attainable by any human being, you have conquered that, by dint of your own merits. So get up to the Heavens with your wife and son.'

11-16. Sūta said: "Indra then sprinkled nectar over the dead son on the funeral pyre, destroying the fatal effect produced by unnatural death. At that time big showers of flowers were thrown on him and *dundubhis* were sounded. In the meanwhile, the prince got up from the funeral pyre. He got back his former beautiful body and he looked peaceful, healthy and greatly satisfied. Hariścandra embraced his son instantly to his bosom; the King and Queen also both regained their former beautiful appearance, and were decked with clothes and garlands. Their hearts were then deeply filled with great joy at their getting back their desired object and their health. Indra then said to the King: 'O highly fortunate one! Now ascend to the Heavens with your son and wife, by dint of your meritorious deeds and get the holy happy ends of your endeavors.'

17. Hariścandra said: 'O King of the Devas! The *caṇḍāla* is my master; so until I get freedom from his bondage, I cannot go to the Heavens without his permission.'

18. Dharma said: I am myself that *caṇḍāla* and had assumed that form and showed you the city of the *caṇḍālas*, knowing that you will suffer.

19. What more than this, that I myself am that very *caṇḍāla*, I am that very Brāhmaṇa and I am that very poisonous serpent who had smitten your boy.' Indra said: 'Hariścandra! Now get up, by virtue of your own meritorious deeds to that place which is highly coveted by all the human beings that exist on earth.'

20-24. Hariścandra said: 'O King of the Devas! I bow down to you. Kindly consider what I say now. All the inhabitants of the city Kośala are in mourning due to their being separated from me. How then, can I go to the Heavens, leaving my sorrow-stricken subjects here? To abandon the *bhaktas*, the devotees, is to incur the great sin equal to the murder of a Brāhmaṇa, the killing of a woman, the drinking of liquors and the killing of a cow. O Indra! It is highly inadvisable to abandon a *bhakta* who is always in service. How can one be happy when one abandons such devotees? So I will not go to the Heavens without them. You better go back to the Heavens. O Lord of the Devas! If my subjects can go with me, I am ready to go with them to the Heavens or to Hell.'

25. Indra said: 'O King! Some of them are more sinful, some are more meritorious; different grades of people exist there. So, O King! How can you desire all to go simultaneously to the Heavens?'

26-29. Hariścandra said: 'O Indra! It is through the power of the citizens that the Kings enjoy their kingdoms, perform great many sacrifices and do many engineering works in excavating tanks, etc. There is no doubt about this. So I, too, have done religious acts and sacrifices through my citizens' help. They gave me all the articles necessary for kings. So how can I now quit them so that I may get the Heavens? O Lord of the Devas! If my

subjects have no such puñyams as to enable them to go up to the Heavens, then let the *puñyam* done by me in giving away charity, in the performance of sacrifices, and other meritorious works be divided amongst them equally. If I myself enjoy *śvarga* for a very long time; but if by your favor, I can enjoy with them even one day's residence in *śvarga* for my merits, that is also superior to me.'

30-33. Indra said: 'Let that be.' Saying thus Indra, the Lord of the three worlds, Viśvāmitra, and Dharma who were very pleased went immediately to Ayodhyā from Kāśī by their *yogik* power. In an instant they reached Ayodhyā, filled with the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras; and Indra exclaimed to them all: 'Let all the citizens come before Hariścandra, without any delay. Today they all will go to the Heavens by virtue of the *puñyam* of Hariścandra.' Thus saying, they took all the men to Hariścandra. Then that religious King told his subjects, 'Let you all now ascend with me to the Heavens.'

34-40. Sūta said: "Hearing these words of Indra and their King, they all became very glad. Then those who were engaged in worldly desires handed over the charge of their worldly concerns to their own sons, gladly became ready to go up to the Heavens. The high-minded King Hariścandra then installed his son Rohitāśva on the royal throne and permitted him to go to the beautiful city Ayodhyā, filled with jolly and healthy inhabitants. Next addressing his son and friends, he took leave of them. Thus, by virtue of his own good deeds, the King Hariścandra attained great celebrity. He then got up and took his seat in the aerial car that has no equal and that goes at will. It was beautifully adorned, very rare even to the Devas and decked with bells emitting jingling *kinkini* sounds. The high-souled Śukrāchārya, versed in the *śāstras* and the *guru* of the Daityas, seeing, Hariścandra in the *vimāna*, spoke thus:

41. 'Oh! What is the glorious result of forbearance (*titiksā*)! What is the great fruit of charity! Oh! Due to whose influence, the King Hariścandra today has attained the same region with Mahendra!'

42-43. Sūta said: "Thus I have described to you all the doings of Hariścandra. Any man oppressed with sorrows and troubles, no doubt attains constant happiness, if he hears it. What more than this, those who want *śvarga* get *śvarga*, those who want son get sons, those who want wife get wife, and those who want kingdoms get kingdoms by hearing this incident.

Here ends the twenty-seventh Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the going of Hariścandra to the Heavens, in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXVIII—the Glory of Śatākṣī Devī

1-3. Janamejaya said: "O Ṛṣi! Wonderful is the story of the religious Rājarsi Hariścandra that you have described, the great Bhakta of Śatākṣī Devī! Why is that auspicious Śivā, the wife of Śiva, called Śatākṣī? Explain to me the cause of it, O Muni! And thus make my birth full of use and success. Who is there amongst the clear-minded that gets fully satisfied when he hears the good deeds of the Devī? Each sentence, describing the good deeds of the Devī, gives the undecaying fruits of Aśvamedha Sacrifice."

4-45. Vyāsa said: "O King. Hear; I am describing the story of Śatākṣī Devī. You are the great devotee of the Devī; so there is nothing that I cannot say to you. In olden times, there was a great Dānava named Durgama: he was very cruel. He, the son of Ruru, was born in the family of Hiraṇyākṣa. Once be thought within himself thus: 'The Munis offer oblations by *mantras* as ordained in the *Vedas*. And the Devas, eating the clarified butter (ghee) of these oblations, get nurtured and strengthened. The *Vedas* are the strength of the Devas; if the *Vedas* be destroyed, the Devas also would be destroyed. Thus it is advisable to destroy the *Vedas*. There is no other easy way to conquer the Devas."

Thus thinking, he went to the Himālayas to perform *tapasyā*. He began to meditate on Brahmā in the space of his heart, and taking air only, passed away his time. He practiced hard *tapasyā* for one thousand years, and the

Devas, Asuras and all the *lokas* were agitated by the power of his *tejas* (fiery luster). Then Bhagavān, the four-faced Brahmā, became pleased with him and mounting on his carrier the swan, came up there to grant him the boon.

Brahmā told clearly the Demon, sitting in *samādhi* with his eyes closed, 'Let all be well with you; now ask what you desire? Satisfied with your *tapasyā*, I have come to grant you a boon.' Hearing thus, the Demon got up from his *samādhi* and worshipping Him duly, said: 'O Lord of the Devas! Give me all the *Vedas*. O Maheśvara! Let all the Vedic *mantrams* that are found in the three worlds, with the Brāhmaṇas and the Devas, come to me and give me such strength as would enable me to conquer the Devas.'

Hearing this, the God Brahmā, the author of the four *Vedas*, replied, 'Let it be as you wish,' and went away. From that time, the Brāhmaṇas forgot all about the *Vedas*. So bathing, *sandhyā*, daily *homas, śrāddha*, sacrifice, *japam* and other rites and performances, all became extinct. Then a cry of universal distress arose on the surface of this wide earth; the Brāhmaṇas began to say to each other: 'How has this happened! How has this come to pass! Now what are we to do? Where the *Vedas* have disappeared?'

Thus when great calamities befell on the earth, the Devas became gradually weaker and weaker, not getting their share of the sacrificial *havis*. At this time, that Demon invaded the city of Amarāvatī. And the Devas, not being able to fight with the Asura of a thunder-like body, fled to various directions. They took refuge in the caves of Mount Sumeru and the inaccessible passes of the mountains, and began to meditate on the Highest Force, the Great Goddess.

O King! When oblations of clarified butter are offered to the Fire, those get transferred to the Sun (Sūryaloka) and get transformed as rains. So when the *homa* ceremonies disappeared, there was the scarcity of rain. The earth became quite dry and not a drop of water was found anywhere. The wells, tanks, pools, rivers all dried up. And this state of no rains lasted one hundred years. Countless people, hundreds and thousands of cows,

buffaloes and other beasts went to the jaws of death. The dead bodies of persons remained in heaps in every house; no persons were to be found to perform their burning ceremonies. When such calamities were seen, the calm and quiet body of the Brāhmaṇas, in their earnestness to worship the Supreme Goddess, went to the Himālayas. They with their whole heart and without taking any food began to worship the Devī daily with their *samādhi*, meditation and worship. 'O Maheśānī! Show mercy on us. O Mother! It's not praiseworthy to Thee to maṇifest Thy such anger on us, the low persons and guilty of all sins. So, O Deveśī! Forgive us. If Thou art angry on us for our faults, even then we may be excused, for Thou art the Internal Ruler within us all and we do whatever Thou impellest us to do. The other Devas become pleased and give fruits when they are worshipped by *japam* and *homa* ceremonies; but that is not even possible due to the disappearance of the Vedic *mantrams* from amongst us. But You are kind as mothers are towards their children whenever they remember. So without Thee, there is no other rescue for these people. O Maheśvarī! Whatever Thou willest, Thou canst do that; so what art Thou seeing again and again? O Maheśarī! How can we live without water, which is called Life. Now rescue us from this great difficulty. O Mother of the Worlds! O Maheśvarī! Be pleased. Oh the Ruler of the endless crores of Brahmāṇḍas! Obeisance to Thee! We bow down to Thee, the Unchangeable, of the nature of Intelligence. We again and again make obeisance to Thee, the Lady of the Universe, realisable by the *Vedānta* words "not this, not this". All the sayings of *Vedānta* declare Thee, by negating other transient objects as the Cause of all this Universe. We with all our hearts bow down to the Devī.'

When the body of the Brāhmaṇas thus praised and chanted the hymns of Maheśvarī, She created innumerable eyes within Her body and became visible. Her color was dark-blue like heaps of collyrium; eyes like the blue lotuses and expanded; breasts hard, regularly elevated round and so fleshy that they touched each other; four-handed; with Her right hand, holding arrows; on the under hand holding lotus; on the upper-left hand holding a great bow and on the lower hand, carrying vegetables, fruits, flower and roots with abundance of juice, destroying hunger, thirst and fever. She was

the Essence of all Beauty; lovely, luminous like a thousand Suns, and the ocean of mercy. That Upholder of the Universe showed Her form and began to shed water from Her eyes. For nine nights continuously, the heavy rains poured down out of the waters flowing from Her eyes. Seeing the misery of all the people, out of pity, She showered incessantly tears from Her eyes; and all the people and medicinal plants were satisfied. What more than this, out of those tears, the rivers began to flow. The Devas that remained hidden in the mountain caves, now came out.

Then the Brāhmaṇas, united with the Devas, began to praise and sing hymns to the Devī. 'Thou art known by the *Vedānta mahāvākyas*. We bow down to Thee. Thou ordained everything to all the worlds by Thy Māyā; so again and again we bow down to Thee. Our Obeisance to Thee! Who art a *kalpa* tree to the *bhaktas* yielding all their desires! Thou assumest the body for the *bhaktas!* Thou art always satisfied; without any equal; the Lord of the Universe! We bow down to Thee. As Thou, O Devī! hast innumerable eyes only for our welfare and peace, therefore Thou wilt be called henceforth by the name Śatākṣī. O Mother! We are very much hungry; so we have no power to chant hymns to Thee; therefore, O Maheśvarī! Show mercy on us and deliver to us our *Vedas*.'

46-68. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing these words of the Devas and the Brāhmaṇas, the Auspicious One gave them the vegetables, delicious fruits and roots to them that were in Her Hand, for their eating. After She was worshipped, She gave to men sufficient quantity of various articles of juicy food and to the beasts, grass, etc., until new crops came out. O King, from that day She became famous by the name of Śākambharī, because She nourished all by Her vegetables, etc.

Great tumult arose and the Demon Durgama heard all from the emissaries and started out to fight with his weapons and army. He took one thousand Aksauhinī armies with him (one Aksauhinī army equals large army consisting of 21,870 chariots, as many elephants, 65,610 horses, and 109,350 infantry) and shooting arrows, he came quickly before the Devī and engaged Her, the Deva army and the Brāhmaṇas. At this, a great

tumultuous uproar arose and the Devas and the Brāhmaṇas united exclaimed: “O Devī! Save us; save us!” The Auspicious Devī, then, for the safety of the Devas and the Dvījas created round them a luminous circle and She Herself remained outside. A terrible fight then ensued between the Devī and the Dānavas. The Sun was covered with their incessant hurling of arrows; and the archers could not shoot accurately on account of the darkness that then prevailed. Then by the collision of the arrows of both the parties, the arrows caught fire and the battlefield again became filled with light. The quarters on all aides resounded with harsh bow sounds and nothing else could be heard.

At this moment came out of the body of the Devī, the principal Śaktis (forces incarnate) Kālikā, Tārinī, Sodaśī, Tripurā, Bhairabī, Kāmalā, Bagalā, Mātangī, Tripurāsundarī, Kāmāksī, Tulajā Devī, Jambhinī, Mohinī, Chchinnamastā, ten thousand armed Guhya Kālīs and others. Thirty-two Śaktis, sixty-four Śaktis and then innumerable Śaktis, all armed, came out of the Devī successively. When the Śaktis destroyed one hundred Aksauhinī forces, Mṛdaṅgas, conchshells, *vīnās* and other musical instruments were sounded in the battlefield. At this time, the enemy of the Devas, Durgama, came in front and first fought with the Śaktis. The fight grew to such a terrible extent that within ten days all the Aksauhinī troops were destroyed. So much so, the blood of the dead soldiers began to flow in torrents like rivers. When the fatal eleventh day arrived the Dānava, wearing red clothes on his waist, red garlands on his neck and annointing his body all over with red sandalwood paste, celebrated a very grand festival, mounted his chariot and went out to fight. With a strenuous effort, he defeated all the Śaktis and placed his chariot before the Devī. Then a terrible fight ensued for two *prahāras* (six hours). The hearts of all shivered with horror. At this time, the Devī shot fifteen very awful arrows at the Dānava. His four horses (Vāhanas) were pierced by Her four arrows; the charioteer was pierced by one arrow; his two eyes were pierced by two arrows; his arms by two arrows, his flag by one arrow and his heart was pierced by five arrows. He then left his body before the Devī, vomitting blood. The vital spirit, the luminous soul emitting from his body, merged in

the space-like body of the Devī. The three worlds, then, assumed a peaceful appearance when that greatly powerful Dānava was killed. Then Hari, Hara, Brahmā and the other Devas began to praise and chant hymns to the World Mother with great devotion and in voices, choked with feelings.

69-73. The Devas said: 'O Auspicious One! Thou art the only Cause of the illusion of this world, presenting an unreal appearance while Brahman is the only Reality. So Thou art the Lady of all the beings—otherwise why it would be that Thou hast nourished all the beings with vegetables, etc. So, obeisance to Thee, the Śākambharī! O Hundred-eyed! O Auspicious One! Thou art sung in all the *Upaniṣads.* O Destroyer of the Durgama Asura! We bow down to Thee, the Lord of Māyā, the Dweller in the five sheaths *anna, rasa*, etc. We meditate upon Thee, the Lady of the Universe, as demonstrated by the *praṇava āūm̐*, whom the chief Munis meditate with their *nirvikalpa* hearts, free from any *vikalpa*, doubts or ignorance. Thou art the Mother of the endless crores of universes! Thou assumest Divine Bodies at times for our welfare! Thou art the Mother of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and others; we bow down to Thee with all our hearts. Thou art the Mother of all; so, out of mercy, Thou hast shed tears from Thy hundred eyes to remove the miseries of the low humble persons. Thou art the Ruler of all!'

74-80. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus when Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Hara and the other Devas praised and chanted various hymns to the Devī, and worshipped Her with various excellent articles, She became instantly pleased. Then the Devī, graciously pleased, handed over the *Vedas* to the Brāhmaṇas. At last, She, the Cuckoo-voiced, made a special address to them: 'These *Vedas* are the excellent parts of My body. So preserve these with your greatest care. The more so, when you all have seen with your own eyes what a great calamity befell on you when these *Vedas* went away out of your hands! You should all worship and serve Me, the Controller of Space, always; there is no other thing higher than this that I can advise you for your welfare. Read always these My excellent glorious deeds. I will be pleased thereby and will destroy all your bad calamities and misfortunes. My name is Durgā, because I have killed this demon Durgama; so he, who will take My names

Durgā and Śatākṣī, he will be able to unveil my Māyā and walk freely. No use in telling more than this that I tell you now, O Devas, the essence of all essences: Both the Suras and the Asuras sould always serve Me and Me, alone.'

81-83. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus giving pleasures to the Devas by these words, the Devī of the nature of Saccidānanda (Existence, Intelligence and Bliss) disappeared before them. O King! This Grand Mystery I have described to you in detail; this is the source of good to all; so keep it secret with every care. The person who hears daily with great devotion this chapter, gets all that he wants and at last gets to worship in the Devī-*loka*.

Here ends the Twenty-eighth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the glory of the Śatākṣī Devī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIX—Birth of Bhagavatī in the house of Dakṣa

1-19. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus I have described the glory of the Devī. Now I will narrate, as far as I can, the excellent lives of the kings of the Solar and the Lunar dynasties respectively. They all attained their excellent glories, simply because they were favored by the Grace of the Highest Śakti; they were all the great devotees of the Supreme Deity. All their prowess, bravery, prosperity and all their glory, know that those all were derived from the mere parts of the Parā-Śakti. O King! Those Kings and others as well were able to out off the tree of this world by the axe of transcendental knowledge, simply because they were the devotees of the Parā-Śakti. So with all the care possible, the Lady of the Universe is to be worshipped and served. Men should avoid worshipping any other gods, as people avoid the husk to get the grain inside. O King! By churning the ocean of the *Vedas*, I have got the jewel as the lotus feet of the Parā-Śakti; and I think that I have discharged all my duties and think myself satisfied and successful. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra and Iśvara are the four feet, and Sadā-Śiva is the plank overhead; thus these five form the seat on which the

Devī is seated. There is no other deity superior to Her. To show this to the ordinary ignorant people the Mahā-Devī has taken this seat composed of the five gods: Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Iśvara and Sadā-Śiva. Superior to these five, what is stated in the *Vedas* as *vyaktam* and in which all this Universe is sewn, as it were, crosswise and lengthwise, lying in and through, that is Bhuvaneśvarī, the Goddess of the Universe.

Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Iśvara and Sadā-Śiva are the Regents or presiding Deities of earth, water, fire, air and *ākāśa*. No man can be free unless he worships the Goddess. When men will be able to encircle the *ākāśa* of the fourth dimension as if it were an antelope skin, then they will be able to root out the miseries of the world without knowing the nature of the Devī. In other words, it is impossible. Thus the *Śvetāśvataropanisada* says: 'Those that were engaged in meditation, *dhyāna-yoga*, saw the Devī covered by the guṇas—*sāttva, rājas* and *tāmas*—and the forces incarnate respectively of the several Devas.'

So to make the human birth a success, first avoid all company, be it out of shame, fear or devotion, or even out of love; then bring the mind and keep it steady in your heart and be devoted to Her, and consider Her as the Supreme. This is the *vedānta-dindima,* the declaration of the *Vedānta*. Whoever takes the name of the Devī, either in sleeping, going or resting or in any other condition, he is certainly freed from the bondage of the world, no doubt. O King! So worship the Māheśvarī with all the care that you can. Go on step-by-step; first worship Her *virāt-rūpa* (cosmic form); then *sūksma-rūpa* (subtle form) and then her *antaryāmī-rūpa* (inner form, ruling from within the heart). Thus when your heart is purified, worship the Parā-Śakti, of the nature of Brahman, beyond this Māyā, this *prapañca-ullāsa*, of the nature of Existence, Intelligence and Bliss. When the *citta* (heart) melts in Parā-Śakti, then comes the real *ārādhanā* (the real worship). So divine your heart in Her.

O King! Thus I have described to you the sanctifying deeds of the extremely devoted kings of the Parā-Śakti, who were noble-minded and religious. One who will hear this will acquire fame, *dharma*, intelligence, a

good end, and merits that have no equal. Now what else do you like to hear?”

20-22. Janamejaya said: “O Bhagavān! In olden times, the World mother Parā-Śakti handed over Gaurī to Hara, Lakṣmī to Hari, and Sarasvatī to Brahmā, born of the lotus from the navel of Hari. Now I hear that Gaurī is the daughter of Himālaya as well of Dakṣa; and Mahā-Lakṣmī is the daughter of the Kṣīroda ocean (ocean of milk). They were all originated from the Prime Devī; how then did Gaurī and Lakṣmī came to be the daughters of others? O great Muni! This seems next to impossible; so my doubt arises. O Bhagavān! You are quite competent to cut off all my doubts; so by your axe of knowledge, cut off my present doubt.”

23-44. Vedavyāsa said: “O King! Hear. I am telling you this wonderful secret. You are greatly devoted to the Devī; so nothing there can be that I cannot disclose to you. Since the time the Great Mother gave Gaurī, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī over to Hara, Hari and Brahmā respectively, these three Devas were performing their duties of creating, preserving, and destroying per Her wishes. O King! Once on a time, certain Dānavas named Halāhalas were born. In time, they became very powerful and in a short time conquered the three worlds. What more than this, that they being elated with a boon granted to them by Brahmā, took their forces and invaded the Mount Kailāśa and the Vaikuṇṭha regions!

Seeing this, Mahādeva and Viṣṇu both made preparations for war. A terrible fight ensued between both the parties. The battle continued incessantly for sixty thousand years but the result was stalemate. Gradually there was a great cry of consternation in the two parties. When Śiva and Viṣṇu with great effort destroyed the Dānavas, O King! Śiva and Viṣṇu then returned to their own houses and began to brag of their powers before their own Śaktis, Gaurī and Lakṣmī; whereas the Demons were killed on account of the Śaktis of Gaurī and Lakṣmī. Seeing them boast, Gaurī and Lakṣmī laughed insincerely, whereon the two gods were very much angry. Under the magic spell of the Prime Māyā They insulted the Śaktis and even

used offensive language. Gaurī and Lakṣmī quit them and disappeared. A great uproar then arose in the worlds.

Both Hari and Hara became lusterless due to their insulting the two Śaktis. They become powerless and unconscious and turned out mad. Seeing this Brahmā became very anxious. He thought: 'Hari and Hara are the two chief Deities; how then these two have become unable to perform the actions of the world! What is the cause? Why this calamity has sprung up out of season? Will there be a *pralaya*, a general dissolution of the world out of some offense, when no actions are being done? I know nothing about this. So how can I find a remedy?'

Being thus very distressed, he began to meditate with his eyes closed in the fourth-dimensional space in the heart. O King! The lotus-born Brahmā then found out by his meditation that this calamity was brought about by the great wrath of the Parā-Śakti. When Hari and Hara did not regain the former natural position, he then tried to find out the remedy. Brahmā began by his own Śakti to carry on the functions of them both—preservation and destruction—for some time. The religious-minded Prajāpati quickly called his sons the Ṛṣis Manu and Sanaka, etc., for bringing peace to the two great Gods. When they came to him, the great ascetic four-faced Brahmā told them: 'I am now busy with many more works; so I am unable carry on my *tapasyā.* By the wrath of the Highest Force, Hari and Hara have become somewhat distracted; so for the satisfaction of the Parā-Śakti I am performing the three functions: Creation, Preservation and Destruction. So you both practice this hard *tapasyā* with the greatest devotion and bring about Her satisfaction. O sons! Do such as Hari and Hara gain their former states and can then be reunited with their own Śaktis respectively. Your fame will increase thereby, no doubt. Rather that family where the two Śaktis will take their birth will purify the whole world and that man himself will be crowned with success.'

45. Vyāsa said: "O King! The pure-hearted Dakṣa and other mind-born sons of Brahmā, hearing the words of the Grandsire, expressed their desire to worship the Parā-Śakti and went to the forest.

Here ends the Twenty-ninth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on birth of the Bhagavatī in the house of Dakṣa in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXX—the Birth of Gaurī, the Śakti-pīṭhas and the Distraction of Śiva

1-12. Vyāsa said: "O King! They went to the forest and fixed their seats on the slope of the Himālayan mountain, engaged themselves in repeating silently the *bīja-mantra* of Mahā-Māyā (*hrīṁ*) and thus practiced their austerities. O King! One hundred thousand years passed in meditation on the Parā-Śakti. The Devī, being pleased, became visible to them. Her form was three-eyed, and of the form of *saccidānanda:* Existence, Intelligence and Bliss; She was filled with mercy. In Her one hand there was the noose; in another hand, goad; in another hand there was the sign bidding her devotees to discard all fear, and in the fourth hand She was ready to offer boons.

The good-natured Munis, seeing this form of the World Mother began to praise Her: 'O Devī! Thou art existing separately in every gross body; we bow down to Thee. Thou art existing wholly (cosmically) in all the gross bodies; we bow down to Thee. O Parameśvarī! Thou art existing separately in every subtle body; we bow down to Thee; Thou art existing universally in all the subtle bodies; we bow down to Thee. Thou art existing separately in all the causal bodies wherein all the *liṅga-dehas* (subtle bodies) are interwoven; we bow down to Thee. Thou art existing universally in all the causal bodies; we bow down to Thee. Thou art of the nature of the unchangeable Brahman, the receptacle of all the *jīvas* and thus residest in all the bodies; so we bow down to Thee. Thou art of the nature of *ātman*, the Goal of all the beings; we bow again and circumambulate Thee.'

Thus the pure-natured Dakṣa and the other Munis praised Her with voices choked with feelings of intense devotion and bowed down to Her feet. Then the Devī, pleased, spoke to them in a sweet cuckoo-like voice. 'O

highly fortunate ones! I am ever ready to grant boons; so ask what you desire.'

O King! Hearing thus, they asked that Hari and Hara both regain their former natural states and be united respectively with their Śaktis, Lakṣmī and Gaurī. Dakṣa again asked: 'O Devī! Let your birth be in my family. O Mother! I will, no doubt, consider myself as having then realized the fulfilment of my life. So, O Parameśvarī! Speak by Thy own mouth how Thy worship, *japam* and meditation will be conducted as well as the various fit places where they would be performed.'

13-16. The Devī said: 'The insult shown towards my Śaktis has led to this calamitous state of Hari and Hara. So they should not repeat such a crime. Now, by My favor, they will regain their health and, of the two Śaktis, one will be born in your family and the other will take Her birth in the *kṣīroda-sāgara*, the ocean of milk. Hari and Hara will get back their Śaktis, when I will send them the chief *mantra*. The chief *mantra* of Mine is the *bīja-mantra* of Māyā (*hrīṁ*). This is always sweet to Me; so worship this *mantra* and make *japam* of this. The form that you are seeing before you is My Bhuvaneśvarī form, that of the Goddess of the Universe, or worship My *virāt-rūpa* (cosmic form), or My *saccidānanda* form. The whole world is my place of worship; so you can meditate on Me and worship Me always and in all places.'

17-23. Vyāsa said: "When Bhuvaneśvarī Devī Who lives in Maṇidvīpa, thus giving Her reply went away, Dakṣa and other Munis all went to Brahmā and informed him with great earnestness of everything that happened. O King! Thus Hari and Hara both became devoid of their haughtiness and got back their previous natures by the Grace of the Supreme Deity, and were thus enabled to perform their functions as before. Then at a certain time, the Devī Bhagavatī, the fiery nature of the Parā-Śakti, took Her birth in the house of the Prajāpati Dakṣa. O King! Everywhere in the *triloka* great festivities were held. All the Devas became glad and showered flowers. The *dundubhis* of the Devas were sounded by the hands and made very grave sounds. The pure-minded saints were gladdened; the Sun's rays looked

purer and cleaner; the rivers were elated with joy and began to flow in their channels. When the world-auspicious Devī, the destroyer of the birth and death of the *jīvas* took Her birth, everything looked propitious. The wise Munis named Her Satī as She was of the nature of *parā-brahman* and Truth Herself. The Prajāpati Dakṣa handed over the Devī, who was before the Śakti of Mahādeva, to that Deva of the Devas, Mahādeva. But due to the misfortune of Dakṣa, the daughter of Dakṣa burnt Herself in a blazing fire."

24-25. Janamejaya said: "O Muni! You have made me now hear a very inauspicious word. How can such a great being of the nature of the Highest Intelligence come to be burnt up in a fire? The mere recollecting of Her Name dispels the terrible danger of burning up by the fire of *saṁsāra*, so how can She be burnt up by fire? I am extremely eager to hear; kindly describe that to me in detail."

26-37. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hear. I am describing to you the ancient history of the burning of Satī. Once on a time, the famous Ṛṣi Durvāsā went to the bank of the river Jambū and saw the Devī there. There he remained with his senses controlled and began to repeat silently the *bīja-mantra* of Māyā. Then the Goddess of the Immortals, Bhagavatī was pleased and gave the Muni a beautiful garland that was on Her neck as Her *prasāda*, that emitted the sweet fragrance of Makaranda (Jasmine). Whereon the bees were about to cluster. The Mahārṣi took it quickly and placed it on his head. He then hurriedly went to see the Mother at the place where Satī's father, the Prajāpati Dakṣa was staying and bowed down to the feet of the Satī. The Prajāpati then asked him: 'O Lord! Whose extraordinary garland is this? How have you got this enchanting garland, rare to the mortals on this earth!'

The eloquent Mahārṣi Durvāsā then spoke to him with tears of love flowing from his eyes: 'O Prajāpati! I have got this beautiful garland that has no equal, as the *prasāda* (favor) of the Devī.' The Prajāpati asked that garland then from him. He, too, thinking that there was nothing in the three worlds that cannot be given to the devotee of the Śakti, gave that garland to the Prajāpati. He took that on his head; then placed it on the nice

bed that was prepared in the bedroom of the couple. Being excited by the sweet fragrant smell of that garland in the night, the Prajāpati engaged in a sexual intercourse. O King! Due to that animal action, the bitter enmity arose in his mind towards Śaṅkara and His Satī. He then began to abuse Śiva. O King! For that offense, the Satī resolved to quit her body that was born of Dakṣa, to preserve the prestige of the *sanātana-darma* of devotion, to Her Husband burnt Her body by the fire arising out of Yoga."

38. Janamejaya said: "O Muni! What did Mahādeva do, thus pained by the bereavement from His consort dearer than His life, when the Satī's body was thus consumed?"

39-50. Vyāsa said: "O King! I am unable to describe properly what happened afterwards. O King! Out of the fire of anger of Śiva, the *pralaya* seemed to threaten the three worlds. Vīrabhadra came into existence with hosts of Bhadra-Kālīs, ready to destroy the three worlds. Brahmā and the other Devas took refuge of Śaṅkara. Though Mahādeva lost everything on Satī's departure, He, the Ocean of Mercy, destroyed the sacrifice of Dakṣa, cut off his head and instead placed the head of a goat, brought him back to life and thus made the Gods free from all fears. He, the Deva of the Devas, then became very much distressed and going to the place of sacrifice, began to weep in great sorrow. He saw that the body of the intelligent Satī was being burnt in the fire of the *citā*.

He cried aloud: 'Oh my Satī! Oh My Satī!' And taking Her body on His neck, began to roam in different countries, like a madman. Seeing that, Brahmā and the other Devas became very anxious and Bhagavān Viṣṇu cut the body into 51 pieces by His arrows. Wherever the parts fell, Śaṅkara remained there in so many different forms. He then said to the Devas: 'Whoever will worship the Bhagavatī with deep devotion in these places, will have nothing left unattained. The Highest Mother will remain close to him there. The persons that will make *puraścaraṇa* (repetition) of the *mantrams*, especially the *māyā-bīja hṛīṁ*, their mantrams will no doubt fructify and become incarnate.' O King! Thus saying, the Mahādeva, being

very much distressed for Satī's departure, passed His time in those places, making *japam, dhyānam* and taking to *samādhi*."

51-52. Janamejaya said: "Where, in what places the several parts of the Satī fell? What are the names of those Siddhapīthas? And what is their number? Kindly describe these in detail, O Great Muni! No doubt I will highly consider myself blessed by hearing these words from your blessed mouth."

53-102. Vyāsa said: "O King! I will now describe those Śakti-*pīṭhas,* the most sacred places, the mere hearing of which destroys all the sins of men. Hear. I describe duly those places where the persons desiring to get lordly powers and to attain success ought to worship and meditate on the Devī. O Mahārāja! The face of Gaurī fell in Kāśī; She is well-known there by the name Viśālākṣī; that which fell in Naimiṣāranya became known by the name of Liṅga Dhārinī. This Mahā-Māyā is known in Prayāg (Allahabad) by the name of Lalitā Devī; in Gandha Mādan, by the name of Kāmukī; in the southern Mānasa, by Kumudā; in the northern Mānasa, by Visvakāmā, the yielder of all desires; in Gomanta, by Gomatī and in the mountain of Mandara, She became known by the name of Kāmachārinī. The Devī is known in Chaitrarath, by the name of of Madotkatā; in Hastināpur, by Jayantī; in Kānyakubja by the name of Gaurī; in the Malaya Mountain, by Rambhā; in the Ekāmrapītha, by Kīrtimatī, in Viśve, by the name of Viśveśvarī; in Puṣkara, by the name of Puruhūtā. She is known as Sanmārga Dāyinī in the Kedāra Pītha; as Mandā, in the top of the Himālayas; and as Bhadrakarnikā in Gokarṇa. She is known as Bhavānī in Sthaneśvara, as Vilvapatrikā in Vilvake; as Mādhavi in Śrī Śaila; as Bhadrā in Bhadreśvara. She is known as Jarā in Varāha Śaila; as Kāmalā in Kāmalālaya; as Rudranī in Rudra Kotī; as Kālī in Kālanjara; She is known as Mahā Devī in Śālagrāma, as Jalapriyā in Śribaliṅgam; as Kapilā in Mahāliṅgam, as Mukuteśvarī in Mākota. As Kumarī in Māyāpurī, as Lalitāmbikā in Santānā; as Maṅgalā in Gayā Kṣetra, as Vimalā in Purusottama. As Utpalāksī in Sahasrākṣa; as Mahotpalā in Hiraṇyākṣa; as Amoghāksī in the Vipāsā River; as Pātalā in Pundra Vardhana. As Nārāyaṇī in Supārśva, as Rudra Sundarī in Trikūta; as Vipulā Devī in Vipulā; as

Kalyānī in Malayāchala. As Ekavīrā in Sahyādri; as Chandrikā in Hariścandra; as Ramanā in Rāma Tīrtha; as Mṛigāvatī in the Yamuṇā. As Kotivī in Kotatīrtha; as Sugandhā in Mādhavavana; as Trisandhyā in the Godāvarī; as Ratipriyā in Gaṅgādvāra. As Śubhānandā in Śiva Kuṇḍam, as Nandinī in Devīkātata; as Rukminī in Dvāravatī; as Rādhā in Vṛṇḍāvana. As Devakī in Mathurā; as Parameśvarī in Pātāla; as Sītā in Citrakuta; as Vindhyādhivāsinī in the Vindhyā range. O King! As Mahā-Lakṣmī in the sacred place of Karavīra, as Umā Devī in Vināyaka; as Ārogyā in Vaidyānātha; as Maheśvarī in Mahākāla, as Abhayā in all the Usna-tīrthas, as Nitambā in the Vindhyā mountain; as Māndavī in Māndavya; as Svāhā in Māheśvarīpūra. As Prachandā in Chhagalanda, as Caṇḍikā in Amarakantaka; as Varārohā in Someśvara; as Puskarāvatī in Prabhāsa. As Devamātā in Sarasvatī; as Parāvārā in Samudrtata; as Mahābhāgā in Mahālayā, as Pingaleśvarī in Payosnī. As Simhikā in Kritaśaucha; as Atiśānkārī in Kārtika; as Lolā in Utpalāvartaka; as Subhadrā in śona Saṅgam. As the Mother Lakṣmī in Siddhavana; as Anangā in Bhāratāśrama; as Viśvamukhī in Jālandhara; as Tārā in the Kiskindhya mountain. As Puṣṭī in Devadāru Vana; as Medhā in Kāśmīramaṇḍalam; as Bhīmā in Himādri; as Tuṣṭī in Viśveśvara Kṣetra. As Śuddhī in Kapālamochana; as Mātā in Kāyāvarohana; as Dharā in Śankhoddhāra; as Dhritī in Pindāraka; as Kalā in Chandrabhāgā river; as Śivadhārinī in Achchoda; as Amritā in Venā; as Urvaśī in Vadarī. As medicines in Uttara Kuru; as Kuśodakā in Kuśadvīpa; as Manmathā in Hemakūta; as Satyavādinī in Kumuda. As Vandanīyā in Aśvattha; as Nidhi in the Vaiśravanālaya; as Gāyatrī in the mouth of the *Vedas;* as Pārvatī near to Śiva. As Indrāni in the Devalokas; as Sarasvatī in the face of Brahmā; as Prabhā (luster) in the Solar disc; as Vaisnavī with the Mātṛkās. She is celebrated as Arundhatī amongst the Satīs, the chaste women and as Tilottamā in the midst of the Rāmās. Again this Mahādevī of the nature of the Great Intelligence (*samvid*) is always existent in the form of Śakti named Brahmakalā in the hearts of all the embodied beings.

O Janamejaya! Thus I have mentioned to you the 108 *pīṭhas* (sacred places or seats of the Deity) and as many Devīs. Thus are mentioned all the seats of the Devīs and along with that, the chief places in India (the world). He

who hears these excellent 108 names of the Devī as well as Her seats, gets himself freed from all sins and goes to the Loka of the Devī. O Janamejaya! His heart gets purified and is rendered blessed, no doubt, who duly makes *yātrā* (pilgrimage) to all these seats of the Deity, performs *śrāddhas*, offers peace-offerings to the *pitṛs*, worships the Goddess with the highest devotion and asks frequently the pardon of the World Mother.

O King! After worship one should feed the Brāhmaṇas, well-dressed virgins (*kumārīs*) and *vatukas* (wandering *sādhus*) with good eatables. All the tribes whether they be *caṇḍālas*, know them all to be of the nature of the Devī and therefore they should be worshipped. Never one is to accept any donation or gifts (*pratigraha*) in these seats of the Devī. The saintly persons should make *purascarana* (repeat the names of their own deities attended with burnt offerings, oblations, etc.) of their own *mantrams* with all their might in all these places and should never be miserly in their expenses on this account. He who starts to these sacred places, with devoted hearts filled with love, finds his *pitṛs* in the higher and greater Brahmā-*loka* for one thousand *kalpas,* and he gets the highest knowledge, crosses the ocean of the world and becomes free. Many people have attained success simply by repeating these 108 names of the Deity. Any place wherein are kept those names, embodied in a *skandha*, becomes free from such dangers as plague, cholera or any misapprehensions from planetary Deities and so forth. Nothing remains to be attained by these persons who repeat these 108 names. That man, devoted to the Devī, certainly attains blessedness. That saintly person becomes of the nature of the Devī. The Devas bow down and worship him when they behold him! What then need be said that the saints would worship him! The *pitṛs* become pleased and get their good ends when these 108 names are read with devotion. These places are, as it were, Intelligence personified (*cinmaya*) ready to yield freedom from bondage. Therefore, O King! Intelligent men should take their shelter in these places. O King! Whatever secrets and other deeper secrets about the Great Goddess you asked to know from me, I described to you. What more do you want to hear? Say."

Here ends the Thirtieth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the birth of Gaurī, the seats of the Deity, and the distraction of Śiva in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Note: The number 108 is a holy number, got by taking the half of 216,000, the number of breaths inhaled by a child in the womb who promises to take the name of God at his every breath or by taking one-eighth of 864,000, the number of seconds in a day. The two zeros are then dropped. Thus the number signifies the one who fulfils one's promise.

Chapter XXXI—Birth of Pārvatī in the House of Himālayas

1-2. Janamejaya said: "O Muni! You told before that 'the Highest Light took Her birth on the top of the Himālayas.' Now describe to me in detail about this Highest Light. What intelligent man can desist from hearing these nectar-like words about the Śakti? The danger of death may come even to the Devas that drink nectar, but no such danger can possibly come to those that drink the nectar of the Devī's glorious deeds."

3-43. Vyāsa said: "O King! You are blessed; you have attained what you are to attain in this life; you are taught by the high-souled men; you are fortunate since you are so sincerely devoted to the Devī. O King! Hear the ancient history: Wherever the Deva of the Devas Maheśvara rested while He was wandering all over the world in a distracted state, carrying the Satī's body that was burnt by fire, He spent his time there with his senses controlled, in *samādhi*, forgetting all knowledge of *saṁsāra* in deep meditation of the form of the Devī. At this time, the three worlds, with their objects, moving and immoving, with their oceans, mountains and islands became void of prosperity and power. The hearts of all the embodied beings became dried up, without any trace of joy; they were all burdened with anxious thoughts and remained indifferent. All were merged in the ocean of sorrows and became diseased. Planets retrograded and the Devas had their states reversed. The Kings were attacked with a series of ills and

misfortunes, both *ādhibhautik* and *ādhidaivik*—from material causes and from divine interference.

At this time a great Asura named Tāraka became unconquerable owing to his receiving a boon from Brahmā. Being intoxicated by his power and heroism, he conquered the three worlds and became the sovereign ruler. The Brahmā Prajāpati gave him a boon to the effect that only the legitimate son of Śiva would be able to kill him. And as at that time Śiva had no son, the great Asura, elated with joy, became infatuated and carried off all victories. All the Devas were banished from their places by his oppression; they remained always anxious owing to the want felt by them of a son of Śiva. The Devas thought, 'Śānkara has now no wife; how can He then have a son? We are very unfortunate; how can our work be accomplished?'

Thus oppressed with thoughts, all the Devas went to Vaikuṇṭha and informed Bhāgavan Viṣṇu of all that had happened, in privacy. Bhāgavan Viṣṇu began to tell them the means, thus: 'O Devas! Why are you all so anxious when the auspicious Goddess of the Universe, the dweller in Maṇidvīpa, the yielder of all desires like a Kalpa-vṛkṣa is always wakeful for you. It is due to your faults that She is showing Her indifference; it is meant to teach us—not for our destruction but to show Her infinite mercy. When a mother nourishes and frightens and reprimands a son, it is not that she has became merciless; so the World Mother, the Controller of the Universe, will never be merciless to you as regards your qualifications and defects. A son commits offense at every step—who can bear that in these three worlds except the mother? So soon take refuge to the Highest Mother, the Goddess of the universe, with the sincerest devotion. She will certainly take action and help your cause.'

Thus ordering the Devas, Viṣṇu with His consort Lakṣmī and the other Devas quickly went out to worship the Devī. Going to the Himālayas, they soon engaged themselves in doing the *puraścaraṇa-karma:* repeating the names of the Deity, attended with burnt oblations and offerings. O King! Those who were well versed with the performance of sacrifice to the Mother began their sacrificial ceremonies, and all began to hold vows like

tritiyādi-vratānī. Some were engaged in incessantly meditating on the Devī; some began to repeat Her names constantly; some began to repeat the Devī-Sūkta. Thus some devoted themselves to repeating names; others to repeating *mantrams*. Again some wore engaged in performing severe *cāndrāyana* and other *vratas*. Some were doing *antarayāgas* (inner sacrifices); some were doing *prāṇāgnihotra-yāgas;* whereas others engaged themselves in *nyāsādi*, etc. Again some began to worship the Highest Śaktī, the Goddess of the Universe, without any sleep or rest, by the *bīja-mantra* of Māyā (*hṛīṁ*).

O King! Thus many years of the Devas passed away. When the ninth *tithī* came in the month of Chaitra on Friday, the Highest Light of the Supreme Force suddenly appeared in front of them. That Light was equal to ten million lightnings, of a red color, and cool like ten million Moons. Again the luster was like ten million Suns. The four *Vedas* personified were chanting hymns all round Her. That mass of fire was above, below, on all sides, in the middle; nowhere it was obstructed. It had no beginning nor end. It was of the form of a female with hands and feet and all the limbs. The appearance was not that of a male nor that of an hermophrodite.

The Devas, dazzled by the brilliant luster, first closed their eyes; but at the next moment, holding patience when they opened again their eyes, they found the Highest Light maṇifesting in the form of an exceedingly beautiful Divine Woman. Her youth was just blooming and Her rising breasts, plump and prominent, vying as it were with a lotus bud, added to the beauty all around. Bracelets were on Her hands; armlets on Her four arms; necklace on Her neck; and a garland made of invaluable gems and jewels spread very bright luster all arouud. Lovely ornaments on Her waist made tinkling sounds and beautiful anklets were on Her feet. The hairs of Her head, flowing between Her ears and cheek, sparkled bright like the large black bees shining on the flower leaves of the blooming Ketakī flower. Her loins were nicely shaped and exquisitely lovely and the hairs on Her navel gave additional beauty. Her exquisitely lively lotus mouth rendered more lustrous and beautiful by the shining golden ear-ornaments, was

filled with betel leaves mixed with camphor; on Her forehead there was the half crescent moon; Her eyebrows were extended and Her eyes looked bright and beautifully splendid like the red lotus; Her nose was elevated and Her lips very sweet. Her teeth were very beautiful like opening buds of Kuṇḍa flowers; from Her neck was suspended a necklace of pearls; on Her head was the brilliant crown decked with diamonds and jewels; on Her ears, earrings were suspended like the lines on the Moon; Her hairs were ornamented with Mallikā and Mālatī flowers; Her forehead was pasted with Kāśmīra Kuṅkuma drops; and Her three eyes gave unparallelled luster to Her face. In Her one hand there was the noose and in Her other hand there was an elephant goad; Her two other hands made signs granting boons and dispelling fears; Her body shed luster like the flowers of a Dārima tree. Her clothing was a red colored cloth. All these added great beauty.

Thus the Devas saw before them the Mother Goddess, the Incarnation of unequalled mercy, with a face ready to offer Her Grace, the Mother of the Whole Universe, the Enchantress of all, sweet-smiling, beloved by all the Devas, yielding all desires, and wearing a dress, indicative of all lovely feelings. The Devas bowed as soon as they saw Her; but they could not speak because their voices were choked with tears. Then holding their patience with much difficulty, they began to praise and chant hymns to the World Mother with their eyes filled with tears of love and devotion and with their heads bent low.

44-54. The Devas said: 'We bow down to Thee, the Devī and the Mahā-Devī, always obeisances to Thee! Thou art the Prakṛti, and the Auspicious One; we always submit to Thee. O Mother! Thou art of a fiery color, residing as a Red Flame in the heart of a *yogī* and burning with Asceticism and Wisdom shedding luster all around. Thou art specially shining everywhere as the pure consciousness; worshipped by the Devas and all the *jīvas* for the rewards of their actions. We take refuge to Thee: Durgā, the Devī. We bow down to Thee, Who can well make others cross the ocean of *saṁsāra;* so that Thou helpest us in crossing this terrible ocean of world.

Mother! The Devas have created the words conveying ideas which are uttered by the five *vāyus, prāṇa* etc., which are of the nature of Viśvarūpa, pervading everywhere like the Kāma-dhenu, the Heavenly Cow yielding all desires, riches, honor, food, etc.), and by which we brutes (the gods) become egotistical.

O Mother! thou art that language to us; so Thou fulfillest our desires when we praise and chant hymns to Thee. O Devī! Thou art the night of destruction at the end of the world; Thou art worshipped by Brahmā; Thou art Lakṣmī, the Śakti of Viṣṇu; Thou art the Mother of Skanda; the *śaktī* of Śiva; Thou art the *śaktī* Sarasvatī of Brahmā. Thou art Aditi, the Mother of the gods and Thou art Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa. Thus Thou art purifying the worlds in various forms and giving peace to all. We bow down to Thee. We know Thee to be the great Mahā-Lakṣmī; we meditate on Thee as of the nature of all the Śaktis as Bhaghavatī. O Mother! Illumine us so that we can meditate and know Thee. O Devī! Obeisance to Thee, the Virāt! Obeisance to Thee, the Sūtrātmā, the Hiraṇyagarbha; obeisance to Thee, the transformed into sixteen *vikṛtis* or transformations. Obeisance to Thee, of the nature of Brahman. We bow down with great devotion to Thee, the Goddess of the Universe, the Creatrix of *māyik avidyā* (nescience) under whose influence this world is mistaken as the rope, as a garland is mistaken for a rope, and again that mistake is corrected by Your Vidyā.

We bow down to Thee who art indicated by both *tat* and *tvam* in the *mahā-vakya* ***tat tvamāsī*** (Thou art That), *tat* indicating the *cit,* consciousness and intelligence of the nature of oneness, and *tvam* indicating the nature of *akhanda-brahman* beyond the *annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya, vijñānamaya* and the *ānandamaya*—the five *kośas*; the Witness of the three states of wakefulness, dream, and deep sleep states, and indicating Thee. O Mother! Thou art of the nature of *praṇava āūṁ̊;* Thou art *hṛīṁ;* Thou art of the nature of various *mantras* and Thou art merciful; we bow down again and again to Thy Lotus Feet.’ When the Devas thus praised the Devī, the dweller in Maṇidvīpa, the Bhagavatī spoke to them in a sweet cuckoo-like voice.

55. ‘O Devas! What for have you come here? What do you want? I am always the tree, yielding all desires to my *bhaktas;* and I am ready to grant boons to them.

56-57. You are my devotees; why do you care, when I am on your side? I will rescue you from the ocean of troubles, O Devas! Know this as My true resolve.’

O King! Hearing these words of deep love, the Devas became very glad and gave out all their causes of troubles:

58-65. ‘O Parameśvarī! Thou art omniscient and witness of all these worlds. What is there in the three worlds that is not known to Thee? O Auspicious Mother! The Demon Tāraka is giving us troubles day and night. Brahmā has given him a boon that he will be killed only by Śiva’s son. O Maheśvarī! Satī, the wife of Śiva has cast aside Her body. This is known to Thee. What will us ignorant low people inform the One Who is Omniscient? O Mother! We have described in brief all what we had to say. What more shall we say? Thou knowest all our other troubles and causes of sorrows. Bless us so that our devotion remains unflinching at Thy Lotus Feet; this is our earnest prayer. That Thou takest a body to have a son of Śiva is our fervent prayer to Thee.’

Hearing the Deva’s words, Parameśvarī, with a graceful countenance, spoke to them, thus: "My Śaktī will incarnate as Gaurī in the house of the Himālayas; She will be the wife of Śiva and will beget a son who will destroy the Tāraka Demon and serve your purpose. And your devotion will remain steadfast at My Lotus feet. The Himālayas, too, is worshipping Me with his wholehearted devotion; so to take birth in his house is to My greatest liking; know this.’

66-73. Vyāsa said: “O King! Hearing the kind words of the Devī, the King of mountains was filled with love; and with voice choked with feelings and with tears in his eyes spoke to the Goddess of the world, the Queen of the three worlds: ‘Thou hast raised me much higher, that Thou dost me so

great a favor; otherwise where am I? inert, and unmoving and where art Thou, of the nature of *saccidānanda?* Your mercy maṇifests the Greatness of Thy Glory. O Sinless One! My becoming the father of Thee indicates nothing less than the merits earned by me for doing countless Aśvamedha sacrifices or for my endless *samādhi*. Oh! What a favor hast Thou shown towards me! Henceforth my unparalleled fame will be spread throughout the whole Universe of five original elements that "The Upholder of the Universe, the World Mother has become the daughter of this Himālayas! This man is blessed and fortunate!" Who can be so fortunate, virtuous and merited as he whose daughter She has become, Whose belly contains millions of *brahmāṇḍas?* I cannot describe what pre-eminent heavens are intended for my *pitṛs*, my family predecessors, wherein virtuous persons like myself are born. O Mother! O Parameśvarī! Now describe to me Thy Real Self as exemplified in all *Vedānta;* and also *jñāṇa* with *bhakti* approved by the *Vedas* in the same way that Thou hast shown already this favor to me, so that by That Knowledge I will be able to realize Thy Self.'

74. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus hearing the praise of Himālayas, the Goddess of the Universe, with a graceful look, began to speak the very secret essences of the *śrutis*."

Here ends the Thirty-first Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the birth of Pārvatī in the House of Himālayas in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXII—Self-realization Taught by the World Mother

1-50. The Devī said: "Hear, ye Immortals! My words with attention, that I am now going to speak to you, hearing which will enable the *jīvas* to realize My Essence. Before the creation, I, only I, existed; nothing else was existent then. My Real Self is known by the names *cit* (consciousness), *samvit* (Intelligence), Parabrahman and others. My *ātman* is beyond mind, beyond thought, beyond any name or mark, without any parallel, and beyond birth, death or any other change or transformation. My Self has one

inherent power called Māyā. This Māyā is neither existent, nor non-existent, nor can it be called both. This indescribable substance Māyā always exists until the final emancipation or *mokṣa*.

Māyā can be destroyed by *brahma-jñāṇa;* so it cannot be called existent; again if Māyā does not exist, the empirical world cannot exist—so it cannot be called nonexistent. Of course it cannot be called both, for that would involve contradiction. This Māyā, without beginning but with end at the time of *mokṣa*, naturally arises fromMy Being, as heat comes out of fire, as the rays come out of the Sun and as the cooling rays come out of the Moon. Just as all the *karmas* of the *jīvas* dissolve in deep sleep (*śusupti*), so at the time of *pralaya,* the General Dissolution, the *karmas* of the *jīvas*, the *jīvas* themselves and Time all become merged in one uniform mass in this great Māyā. United with My Śaktī, I am the Cause of this world; this Śaktī thus has the defect that it has the power of hiding Me, its Originator.

I am *nirguṇa*. And when I am united with my Śaktī Māyā, I become *saguṇa*, the Great Cause of this world. This Māyā is divided into two, *vidyā* and *avidyā*. *Avidyā-māyā* hides Me; whereas *vidyā-māyā* does not. *Avidyā* creates whereas *vidyā-māyā* liberates.

Māyā united with *caitanya* (conscious intelligence), *cidābhāsa* is the efficient cause of this Universe; whereas Māyā reduced to and united with five original elements is the material cause of the Universe. Some call this Māyā *tapas;* some call Her inert, material; some call Her knowledge; some call Her *māyā*, *pradhāna*, *prakṛti*, *ajā* (unborn) and some others call Her Śaktī. The Śaiva authors call Her *vimarśa* and other Vedāntists call Her *avidyā;* in short, this Māyā is in the heads of all the Paṇḍitas. This Māyā is called various names in the *Nigamas*.

That which is seen is inert; for this reason Māyā is *jaḍa* (inert); as the knowledge it conveys is destroyed, it is false. *Caitanya* (intelligence) is not seen; if it were seen, it would have been *jaḍa*. *Caitanya* is self-luminous; not illumined by any other source. Were it so, its enlightener would have to be illumined by some other thing, and so the fallacy of *anavasthā* (infinite

regression) creeps in as an endless series of causes and effects. Again one thing cannot be both the actor and the thing acted upon; so *caitanya* cannot be illumined by itself. So *caitanya* is Self-luminous; and it illumines Sun, Moon, etc., as a lamp is self-luminous and illumines other objects. So, O Mountain! This My Intelligence is established as eternal and everlasting. The waking, dreaming and deep sleep states do not remain constant but the sense of 'I' remains the same, whether in waking, dreaming or deep sleep state; its anomaly is never felt.

The Bauddhas say that the sense of intelligence, *jñāṇa*, is also not felt, there is only the absence of it; so what is existent is also only temporarily existent. But it can be argued that then the Witness by which that absence is sensed, that intelligence in the shape of the Witness, is eternal. So the Paṇḍitas of all the reasonable *śāstras* declare that *saṁvit* (intelligence) is eternal, and it is also blissful, the fountain of all love. Never the *jīvas* or embodied souls feel "I am not", but always "I am". This feeling is deeply established in the soul as Self-love (*anya-bhakti*).

Thus it is clearly evident that I am quite separate from anything else, which are all false. Also I am one and continuous—no interval or separation existing within Me. Again, *jñāṇa* is not the *dharma* or natural quality of *ātman* but it is the very nature of *ātman*. If *jñāṇa* were the *dharma* of *ātman*, then *jñāṇa* would have to be material; so *jñāṇa* is immaterial. If for argument's sake, *jñāṇa* be denominated as material, that cannot be. For *jñāṇa* is of the nature of intelligence, and *ātman* is also of the nature of intelligence. Intelligence has not the attribute of being *dharma*. Here the thing *cit* is nondifferent from its quality, *cit*. So *ātman* is always of the nature of *jñāṇa* and happiness; Its nature is Truth; It is always full, unattached and void of duality. This *ātman* again, united with Māyā, composed of desires and *karmas*, due to want of discrimination, wants to create the twenty-four *tattvas*, according to the previous *saṁskāras* (tendencies), time and *karma*. O Mountain! The reawakening after *pralaya-suśupti* is not done with *buddhi,* for then *buddhi* is not at all maṇifested. So this creation is said to be effected without any *buddhi* or proper intelligence. O chief of the immovables! The

tattva (reality) that I have spoken to you is most excellent, and it is merely My Extraordinary Form. In the *Vedas* it is known as *avyākṛta* (unmodified) and *avyakta* (unmaṇifested)

Māyā-śabala (divided into various parts) in all *śāstras*, is stated to be the cause of all causes, the Primeval *tattva* and the *saccidānanda-vigraha*. Where all *karmas* are solidified and where *icchā-śaktī* (will), *jñāṇa-śaktī* (intelligence) and *kriyā-śaktī* (action) all are melted in one, that is called the *mantra* ***hṛīṁ***, the first *tattva*. From this comes out *ākāṣa*, having the property of sound, thence *vāyu* (air) with the property of touch; then fire with form, then water having the property of *rasa* or taste; and lastly the earth having the quality of smell. The Paṇḍitas say that sound is the only quality of *ākāṣa;* air has two qualities, sound and touch; fire has three qualities—sound, touch and form; water has four qualities—sound, touch, form and taste; and earth has five qualities—sound, touch, form, taste and smell.

Out of these five original elements, the all-pervading *sūtra* (string or thread) arose. This *sūtrātman* (soul) is called the *liṅga-deha*, comprising within itself all the *prāṇas;* this is the subtle body of the Paramātman. And what is said in the previous lines as *avyakta* or unmaṇifested, and in which the Seed of the World is involved and whence the *liṅga-deha* has sprung, that is called the causal or *kārana* body of the Paramātman. The five original elements, *apañcikṛta* called the five *tanmātrās* being created, next by the *pañcīkaraṇa* process, the gross elements are created.

The process is now being stated: O Girijā! Each of the five original elements is divided into two parts; one part of each of which is subdivided into four parts. This fourth part of each is united with the half of four other elements different from it, and thus each gross element is formed. By these five gross elements, the *virāt-rūpa* cosmic body is formed, and this is called the Gross Body of God. The *jñānendriyas* or organs of knowledge arise from the *sattva-guṇas* of each of these five elements. Again the *sattva-guṇas* of each of the *jñānendriyas* united become the *antaḥ-karanāni*. This *antaḥ-karana* is of four kinds, according as its functions vary. When it is engaged in forming *saṅkalpas* (resolves) and *vikalpas* (doubts) it is called mind. When it is free

from doubts and when it arrives at the decisive conclusion, it is called *citta;* and when it rests simply on itself in the shape of the feeling 'I', it is called *ahaṅkāra*. From the *rajo-guṇa* of each of the five elements arises *vāk* (speech), *pāni* (hands) *pāda* (feet), *pāyu* (anus) and *upastha* (organs of generation). Again their *rajo-guṇa* parts united give rise to the five *prāṇas: prāṇa, apāna, samāna, udāna* and *vyāna.* The *prāṇa-vayu* resides in the heart; *apāna-vayu* in the arms; *samāna-vayu* resides in the Navel; *udāna-vayu* rasides in the throat; and the *vyāna-vāyu* pervades all over the body.

My subtle body, *liṅga-deha* arises from the union of the five *jñānendriyas*, the five *karmendriyas* (organs of action), the five *prāṇas,* the mind and *buddhi*, these seventeen elements. And the Prakṛti that resides there is divided into two parts; one is pure *śuddha-sattva* Māyā and the other is the impure Māyā or *avidyā* united with the *guṇas*. By Māyā is meant She, who, without concealing Her refugees, protects them. When the Supreme Self is reflected on this *śuddha-sattva* Māyā, He is called Īśvara. This *śuddha-sattva* Māyā does not conceal Brahman, its receptacle; therefore She knows the All-pervading Brahman and She is omniscient, omnipotent, the Lady of all and confers favors and blessings on all. When the Supreme Self is reflected on the impure Māyā or *avidyā*, He is called *jīva*. This *avidyā* conceals Brahman, Whose nature is Happiness; therefore this *jīva* is the source of all miseries. Both Īśvara and *jīva* have three bodies and three names, by the influence of *vidyā* and *avidyā*. When the *jīva* lives in his causal body, he is named *prājña;* when he lives in subtle body he is known as *taijasa;* while he has the gross body, he is called *viśva*. So when Īśvara is in His causal body, he is denominated Īśa; when He is in His subtle body, he is known as Sūtra; and when He is in His gross body, He is known as Virāt.

The *jīva* glories in having these three kinds of differentiated bodies, and Īśvara glories in having these three kinds of cosmic bodies. Thus Īśvara is the Lord of all and though He feels Himself always happy and satisfied, yet to favor the *jīvas* and to give them liberation (*mokṣa*) He has created various sorts of worldly things for their *bhoga* (enjoyments). This Īśvara creates all the Universe, impelled by My Brahma-Śaktī. I am of the nature of

Brahman; and Īśvara is conceived in Me as a snake is imagined in a rope. Therefore Īśvara has to remain dependent on My Śakti."

Here ends the Thirty-second Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on Self-realization, spoken by the World Mother in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXIII—Devī's Virat-Rūpa

1-19. Devī said: "O Girirāja! This whole universe, moving and unmoving, is created by My Māyā-śaktī. This Māyā is conceived in Me. It is not, in reality, different or separate from Me. So I am the only *cit*, conscious intelligence. There is no other intelligence than Me. Viewed practically, it is known variously as Māyā or Vidyā; but viewed really from the point of Brahman, there is no such thing as Māyā; only one Brahman exists, and I am that Brahman, of the nature of pure intelligence.

I create this whole world—composed of *avidyā, karma* and various *saṁskāras* —on this unchangeable, eternal, mountain-like Brahman, and enter first as *prāṇa* (vital breath) within it in the form of *cidābhāsa,* the reflection or appearance of consciousness. O Mountain! Unless I enter as breath, how can this birth and death, leaving and retaking bodies after bodies be accounted for? As the one great *ākāśā* is denominated variously *ghatākāśa* (*ākāśā* in the air), *patākāśa* (*ākāśā* in cloth or picture) and so on, so I too appear variously by acknowledging this *prāṇa* in various places due to *avidyā* and various *antaḥkaranas*. As the Sun's rays are never defiled when they illumine various impure objects on earth, so I too am not defiled in entering thus into various high and low *antaḥkaranas* (hearts). Ignorant people attach *buddhi* and other aspects of activity to Me and say that *ātman* is the doer; intelligent people do not say that. I remain, not as the Doer but as the Witness in the hearts of all men.

O Achalendra! There are many *jīvas* and many *īśvaras* due to the varieties in *avidyā* and *vidyā*. Really it is Māyā alone that differentiates into men, beasts and various other *jīvas;* and it is Māyā that differentiates into Brahmā,

Viṣṇu and other Īśvaras. As the one pervading sky (*ākāśa*) is called *mahākāśa* (open sky) or *ghatākaśa* (being enclosed by jars), so the One All-pervading Paramātmā is called Paramātmā (the Supreme Soul) or *jīvātmā* (being enclosed within *jīvas*). As the *jīvas* are conceived as many by Māyā, not in reality; so Īśvaras also are conceived many by Māyā; not in essence. O Mountain! This *avidyā* and nothing else is the cause of the difference in *jīvas*, by creating differences in their bodies, *indriyas* (sense organs) and minds. Again, due to the varieties in the three *guṇas* and their wants due to the differences between *sāttvik, rājasik* and *tāmasik* desires), Māyā also appears various. And their differences are the causes of different Īśvaras like Brahmā, Viṣṇu and others.

O Mountain! This whole world is interwoven in Me; It is I that am the Īśvara that resides in causal bodies; I am the *sutrātman*, the *hiraṇyagarbha* that resides in subtle bodies, and it is I that am the *virāt*, residing in the gross bodies. I am Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara; I am the Brāhmā, Vaiṣṇavī and Raudrī Śaktis. I am the Sun, I am the Moon, I am the Stars; I am beasts, birds, *candālas* and I am the thief, I am the cruel hunter; I am the virtuous high-souled persons and I am the female, male and hermaphrodite. There is no doubt about this. O Mountain! Wherever there is anything seen or heard, I always exist there within and without. There is nothing moving or unmoving that can exist without Me. If there seems to be such, that is as impossible as the son of a barren woman. Just as one rope is mistaken for a snake or a garland, so I am the One Brahman that appears as Īśvara, etc. There is no doubt about this. This world cannot appear without a substratum, and That Substratum is My Existence. There can be nothing else."

20. The Himālayas said: "O Devī! If Thou art merciful on me, I desire then to see Thy Virāt form in the Fourth Dimensional Space."

This sight is developed when the mind resides in the heart center or in the center of the eyebrows. A proper teacher is necessary.

21-41. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing the words of Girirāja, Viṣṇu and all the other Devas gladly seconded him. Then the Devī, the Goddess of the Universe, knowing the desires of the Devas, showed Her own form that fulfils the desires of the *bhaktas*, that is auspicious and that is like the *kalpa-vṛkṣa* for the *bhaktas*. They saw Her highest *virāt* form. The Satyaloka is situated on the topmost part and is Her head; the Sun and Moon are Her eyes; the quarters, Her ears; the *Vedas* are Her words; the Universe is Her heart; the earth is Her loins; the Bhuvarloka is Her navel; the asterisms are Her thighs; the Mahārloka is Her neck; the Janarloka is Her face; the Tapoloka is Her head, situated below the Satyaloka; Indra and the Devas and the Svarloka is Her arms; the sound is the organ of Her ears; the Aśvin twins, Her nose; the smell is the organ of smell; the fire is within Her face; day and night are like Her two wings. The four-faced Brahmā is Her eyebrows; water is Her palate; the juice thereof is Her organ of taste; Yama, the God of Death, is Her large teeth; the affection is Her small teeth; Māyā is Her smile; the creation of Universe is Her sidelong glance; modesty is Her upper lip; covetousness is Her lower lip; unrighteousness is Her back. The Prajāpati is Her organ of generation; the oceans are Her bowels; the mountains are Her bones; the rivers are Her veins; and the trees are the hairs of Her body. O King! Youth, virginity, and old age are Her best gaits, positions or ways, courses or paths, the clouds are Her handsome hairs; the two twilights are Her clothing; the Moon is the mind of the Mother of the Universe; Hari is Her *vijñāna-śākti* (the knowledge power); and Rudra is Her all-destroying power. The horses and other animals are Her loins; the lower regions Atala, etc., are Her lower regions from Her hip to Her feet. The Devas began to behold Her Cosmic (*virāta*) appearance with eyes wide with wonder. Thousands of fiery rays emitted from Her form; She began to lick the whole universe with Her lips; the two rows of teeth began to make horrible sounds; fires came out from Her eyes; various weapons were seen in Her hands; and the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas are to become the food of that awful Deity. Thousands of heads, eyes and feet were seen in that form. Crores of Suns and crores of lightning flashes mingled there. Horrible, awful, that appearance looked terrific to the eyes, heart and mind. The Devas thus beheld and began to utter cries of horror and consternation;

their hearts trembled and they were caught with immoveable senselessness. The idea 'Here is the Devī, our Mother and Preserver' vanished away at once from their minds.

At this moment the *Vedas* on the four sides of the Devī, removed the swoon of the Devas and made them conscious. The Immortals got, then, the excellent *Vedas;* and again having patience, began to praise and chant hymns in words choked with feelings and with tears flowing flowing from their eyes.

42-53. The Devas said: 'O Mother! Forgive our faults. Protect us, the miserable ones born of Thee. O Protectress of the Devas! Withhold Thy anger; we are very much terrified at the sight of Thy form. 'O Devī! We are inferior immortals; what prayers can we offer to Thee? Thou Thyself canst not measure Thy powers; how then can we, who are born later, know of Thy greatness! Obeisance to Thee, the Lady of the Universe! Obeisance to Thee of the nature of the *praṇava āūṁ̊;* Thou art the One that is proved in all the *Vedānta*. Obeisance to Thee, of the form of *hṛīṁ!* Obeisance to Thee, the Self of all, whence has originated the Fire, the Sun, and the Moon and whence have sprung all the medicinal plants. Obeisance to the Devī, the Cosmic Deity, the Self in all, whence have sprung all the Devas, Sādhyas, beasts, birds and men! We bow down again and again to the Great Form, Māhā-Māyā, the Self of all, whence have sprung the vital breath *prāṇa*, *apāna*, grains and wheats, and Who is the source of asceticism, faith, truth, continence and the rules what to do and what not to do under the present circumstances. The seven *prāṇas*, the seven *lokas*, the seven Flames, the seven *samidhs*, the seven Oblations to Fire, all have sprung from Thee! Obeisance to Thee, the Great Self in all! Obeisance to the Universal form of the Deity of the Universe whence have sprung all the oceans, all the mountains, all the rivers, all the medicinal plants and all the *rasas,* the tastes of all things. We bow down to that *virāt* form, the Great Self, Mahā-Māyā, whence have originated the sacrifices, the sacrifical post to which the victim about to be immolated is bound, *dakśiṇās* (the sacrificial fees) and the *Ṛg*, *Yajus* and *Sāma-Vedas*. O Mother! O Mahā-Māyā! We bow down to Thy

front, to Thy back, to Thy both the sides, to Thy top, to Thy bottom and on all sides of Thee. O Devī! Be kind enough to withhold this extraordinary terrific form of Thine, and show us Thy beautiful lovely form.'

54-56. Vyāsa said: "O King! The World Mother, the ocean of mercy, seeing the Devas terrified, withheld Her fearful cosmic form and showed Her very beautiful appearance, pleasing to the whole world. Her body became soft and gentle. In one hand She held the noose, and in another She held the elephant goad. The two other hands made signs to dispel all their fears and ready to grant them boons. Her eyes emitted rays of kindness; Her face was adorned with beautiful smiles. The Devas became glad at this and bowed down to Her in a peaceful mind and then spoke with great joy."

Here ends the Thirty-third Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the Devī's Virāt Rūpa in the Mahā Parānam, Sri Mad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXIV—Knowledge and Final Emancipation

1-22. The Devī said: "O Devas! You are not at all worthy to see this My wonderful cosmic form. Where are ye? and where is this My form? But it is My affection towards the *bhaktas* that I have shown to you this great form of Mine. Nobody can see this form without My Grace; study of the *Vedas*, practice of *yoga*, charity, sacrifice, austerities or any other *sādhanas* are quite incompetent to make this form visible to anybody. O King of mountains! Now hear the real instructions. The Great Self is the only Supreme in this world of Māyā (illusion). He it is that under the various *upādhis* of an actor and enjoyer performs various functions leading to *dharma* (righteousness) and *adharma* (unrighteouss). Then He goes into various wombs and enjoys pleasure or pain according to his *karma*. Then again owing to the tendencies pertaining to these births, He becomes engaged in various functions and gets again various bodies and enjoys varieties of pleasures and pains. O best of mountains! There is no cessation of these births and deaths; it is like a regular clockwork machine; it has no beginning and it goes on working

endlessly. Ignorance or *avidyā* is the cause of this *saṁsāra*. Desire comes out of this and action flows thence. So men ought to try their best to get rid of this ignorance.

O King of Mountains! What more to say than this that the goal of life is attained when this ignorance is destroyed. The highest goal is attained by a *jīva* when he becomes liberated while living . And *vidyā* is the only thing that is able and skilful in destroying this ignorance. As darkness cannot dispel darkness, so the *karma* done out of ignorance is ignorance itself; and such work cannot destroy ignorance. So it is not proper to expect that this *avidyā* can be destroyed by doing work. The works are entirely futile. The *jīvas* want again and again the sensual enjoyments out of this *karma*. Attachment arises out of this desire; discrepancies creep in, and out of this ignorant attachment great calamities befall when such faults or discrepancies are committed. So every sane man ought to make his best effort to get this *jñāṇam,* knowledge of Self-realization. And as it is also enjoined in the *śrutis* that one ought to do actions and try to live one hundred years, so it is advisable to do works also. Again the *śrutis* declate that 'the final liberation comes from Knowledge' so one ought to acquire *jñāṇam*. If both these be collectively followed, then works become beneficial and helping to *jñāṇam*. Therefore the *jīvas* should take up both of these. Others say that this is impossible owing to their contradictory natures. The knots of heart are let loose by *jñāṇam* and the knots are knit more by *karma*. So how can they be reconciled? They are so very diametrically opposite. Darkness and light cannot be brought together, so *jñāṇam* and *karma* cannot be brought together. Therefore one ought to do all the *karmas* as enjoined in the *Vedas* as best as one can, until one gets *cittaśuddhi,* purification of one's heart and mind. *Karmas* are to be done until *śama* (control of the inner organs of senses), *dama* (the control of the outer organs of senses), *titikṣā* (the power to endure heat and cold and other dualities), *vairāgyam* (dispassion and renunciation) and *sattva-sambhava* (the birth of pure *sattva-guṇa* in one's heart) take place. After these, *karma* ceases for that man. Then one ought to take *sannyāsa* from a *guru* who has got his senses under control, who is versed in the *śrutis*, attached to Brahman and practicing the

yogik union with Brahman. He should approach to him with an unfeigned *bhakti*. He should day and night, without any laziness, do *śravanam, mananam* and *nididhyāsanam* (hearing, thinking and deeply realising) of the *Vedānta* sayings. He should constantly ponder over the meanings of the *mahāvākyam* ***tat tvam āsī***, meaning 'Thou art That'; it asserts the identity of the Supreme Self (Brahman) and embodied self (*jīvātmā*). When this identity is realized, fearlessness comes and he then gets My nature.

First of all, he should try to realize by reasoning the idea conveyed by that sentence. By the word *tat* is meant Myself, of the nature of Brahman; by the word *tvam* is meant the *jīva,* the embodied self; and the word *āsī* indicates, no doubt, the identity of these two. The two words *tat* and *tvam* apparently cannot be identified, as they seem to convey contradictory meanings: *tat* implying omniscience, omnipresence and other universal qualities and *tvam* implying non-omniscience and other qualities of a limited nature. So to establish the identity between the two, one ought to adopt *bhāgalakṣmanā* and *tyāgalakṣmanā*. *Bhāgalaksmanā* is a kind of *lakṣmanā* or secondary use of a word, by which it partly loses and partly retains its primary meaning, also called *jahadajahallakṣanā*. Similarly, *tyāgalakṣmanā* is a secondary use of a word by which it loses partly its primary meaning.

23-40. The Supreme Self is Brahman—pure consciousness endowed with omniscience etc., and the embodied self is limited *jīva* consciousness. Leaving aside both their adjuncts, we take consciousness, where both of them are indentical and we come to Brahman, one without a second. The example is now quoted to illustrate what is called *bhāgalakṣmanā* and *tyāgalakṣmanā*. 'This is that Devadatta' means that the person Devadatta seen before and Devadatta seen now are one and the same person, if we leave aside the time past and the time present, and take the body of Devadatta only. This gross body arises from the *pañcīkṛta* gross elements. It is the receptacle of enjoying the fruits of its *karma* and liable to disease and old age. This body is all Māyā; therefore it has certainly no real existence. O lord of mountains! Know this to be the gross *upādhi* (limitation) of My real Self. The five *jñanendriyas* (sense organs), five *karmendriyas* (working

organs), the *prāṇa-vāyus*, mind and buddhi (rational intellect) in all, these seventeen go to form the subtle body, *sūkṣma-deha*. So the Paṇḍitas say. This body of the Supreme Self is caused by the *apañcīkṛta* five original elements. Through this body, pain and pleasure are felt in the heart. This is the second *upādhi* of the *ātman*. The *ajñāṇa* or primeval ignorance, without beginning and indescribable, is the third body of the *ātman*. Know this also to be My third *upādhi*. When all these *upādhis* subside, only the Supreme Self Brahman remains.

Within these three gross and subtle bodies, the five sheaths—*annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya, vijñāṇamaya* and *ānandamaya*—always exist. When these are renounced, *brahmapuccha* is obtained. That is Brahman and My nature, too. This is the goal of the *Vedānta* slogan 'Not this; not this'. This Self is not born nor does It die. It does not live also, being born. But it remains constant, though It is not born. This Self is unborn, eternal, everlasting, ancient. It is not killed when the body is killed. If one wants to kill it or thinks It as slain, both of them do not know; this does not kill nor is it killed. This *ātman*, subtler than the subtlest, and greater than the greatest, resides within the cave (the *buddhi*) of the *jīvas*. He whose heart is purified and who is free from *saṅkalpa* and *vikalpa* (doubt and mental phenomena), directly knows It and Its glory, and is free from sorrows and troubles. Know this *ātman* and *buddhi* as the charioteer, this body as the chariot, and the mind as the reins. The senses and their organs are the horses and the objects of enjoyments are their aims. The sages declare that *ātman* united with mind and organs of senses enjoys the objects. He who is non-discriminating, unmindful and always impure does not realize his *ātman;* rather he is bound in this world. He who is discriminating, mindful and always pure reaches the goal, realizes the Highest Self; and he is not fallen again from That. That man whose charioteer is discrimination, and who keeps his senses under control by keeping tight the reins of his mind, becomes able to cross the ocean of *saṁsāra* and gets My Highest Abode, of the nature of everlasting Existence, Intelligence and Bliss. Thus one should always meditate intensely on Me to realize the nature of Self by *śravanam*

(hearing), *mananam* (thinking) and realising one's own self by one's Self (pure heart).

41-44. When by constant practice as described above, one's heart is fit for *samādhi,* being absorbed in the Spirit, just before that he should understand the meanings of the separate letters in the *root-mantra* of Mahāmāyā, *hṛīṁ*. The letter *ha* means the gross body, the letter *ra* means the subtle body, the letter *ī* means the causal body, and the *bindu,* the dot over the semicircle, is the fourth *turīya* state of Mine. Thus meditating on the separate differentiated states, the intelligent man should meditate on the aforesaid three *bījas* in the cosmic body also, and he should then try to establish the identity between the two. Before entering into *samādhi*, after very carefully thinking the above, one should close one's eyes and meditate on Me, the Supreme Deity of the Universe, the Luminous and Self-Effulgent Brahman.

45-50. O chief of mountains! Putting a stop to all worldly desires, free from jealousy and other evils, he should by constant practice of *prāṇāyāma* make equal according to the rules of *prāṇāyāma*, the *prāṇa* (the inhaled breath) and *apāna* (exhaled breath) *vāyūs* and with an unfeigned devotion get the gross body *vaiśvānara* indicated by the letter *ha* dissolved in the subtle body *taijasa*. The *taijasa* body, the letter *ra* is in a cave where there is no noise: the *suśumnā* cave. After that he should dissolve the *taijasa*, *ra* into the causal body *ī*. He should then dissolve the causal body, the *prājña ī* into the *turīya* state *hṛīṁ*. Then he should go into a region where there is no speech or the thing spoken, which is absolutely free from dualities, that *akhanda saccidānanda* and meditate on that Highest Self in the midst of the fiery flame of consciousness. O King of mountains! Thus men by the meditation mentioned above, should realize the identity between the *jīva* and *brahman,* see Me and get My Nature. O lord of mountains! Thus the firmly resolved intelligent man, sees and realizes by practice of this *yoga* the nature of My Highest Self, and destroys immediately ignorance and all the actions thereof."

Here ends the Thirty-fourth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the Knowledge, Final Emancipation in the Mahā Purāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXV—Yoga and Mantra Siddhi

1. Himālaya said: "O Maheśvarī! Now tell me the *yoga* with all its *aṅgas* (limbs) giving the knowledge of the Supreme Consciousness so that I may realize my Self when I practice according to those instructions."

2-10. Śrī Devī said: "This *yoga* does not exist in the Heavens; nor does it exist on earth or in the nether regions (Pātāla). Those who are skilled in *yoga* say that the realization of the identity between the *jivātma* and the Paramātmā is *yoga*. O sinless one! The enemies to this *yoga* are six: lust, anger, greed, ignorance, vanity and jealousy. The *yogīs* attain *yoga* when they become able to destroy these six enemies by practicing the accompaniments to *yoga*: *yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāranā, dhyāna* and *samādhi*—these are the eight limbs of *yoga*. *Yama* includes *ahimsā* (non-injuring; non-killing), truthfulness, *asteyam* (non-stealing by mind or deed), *brahmācārya* (continence), *dayā* (mercy to all beings), uprightness, forgiveness, steadiness, eating regularly and frugally, and external and internal cleanliness. These are ten in number. *Niyama* includes also ten qualities: *tapasyā* (austerities and penances), contentment, *āstikya* (faith in God and the *Vedas*, Devas, *dharma* and *adharma*), charity (in good causes), worship of God, hearing the *siddhāntas* (established sayings) of the *Vedas*, *hrī* or modesty (not to do any irreligious or blameable acts), *śraddhā* (faith to do good works that are sanctioned), *japam* (uttering silently the *mantrams*, *gāyatrīs* or sayings of the *Purāṇas*) and *homam* (offering oblations daily to the Sacred Fire). There are five *āsanas* (postures) that are commendable: *padmāsana*, *svastikāsana*, *bhadrāsana*, *vajrāsana* and *vīrāsana*. *Padmāsana* consists in crossing the legs and placing the feet on the opposite thighs (the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh), catching the toes of the right foot by the right hand brought round the back, and catching the toes of the left foot by the left hand brought round

the back; sitting then straight and with ease. This is recommended by the *yogīs,* and by this one can raise oneself in the air.

11-20. Place the soles of the feet completely under the thighs, keep the body straight, and sit at ease. This is called *svastikāsana*. *Bhadrāsana* consists in placing well the two heels on the two sides of the two nerves of the testicle, near the anus and catching the two heels by the two hands at the lower part of the testicles and then sitting at ease. This is very much liked by the *yogīs. Vajrāsana* (diamond seat) consists in placing the feet on the two thighs respectively and placing the fingers below the thighs with the hands also there, and then sitting at ease. *Vīrasana* consists in sitting cross on the hams in placing the right foot under the right thigh and the left foot under the left thigh and sitting at ease with body straight.

Taking in the breath by the *idā* (the left nostril) so long as we count *āūm̐* sixteen times, retaining it in the *suśumnā* so long as we count *āūm̐* sixty-four times, and then exhaling it slowly by the *piṅgalā-nādi* (the right nostril) as long as we count *āūm̐* thirty-two times. The first process is called *pūraka*, the second is called *kumbhaka*, and the third is called *recaka*. This is called one *prāṇāyāma* by those versed in *yoga*. Thus one should go on again and again with his *prāṇāyāma*. At the very beginning, try with the number twelve, i. e., as we count *āūm̐* twelve times, and then increase the number gradually to sixteen and so on. *Prāṇāyāma* is of two kinds: *sagarbha* and *vigarbha*. It is called *sagarbha* when *prāṇāyāma* is performed with repeating the *iṣṭā-mantra japam* and meditation. It is called *vigarbha-prāṇāyāma* when *āūm̐* is simply counted and no other *mantram*. When this *prāṇāyāma* is practiced repeatedly, perspiration comes first when it is called of the lowest order; when the body begins to tremble, it is called middling; and when one rises up in the air, leaving the ground, it is called the best *prāṇāyāma*. Therefore one who practices *prāṇāyāma* ought to continue it until he becomes able to rise in the air.

21-30. Now comes *pratyāhāra*. The senses travel spontaneously towards their objects, as if they are without anyone to check. To curb them perforce and to make them turn backwards from those objects is called *pratyāhāra*.

To hold the *prāṇa-vāyu* on toes, heels, knees, thighs, sacrum, genital organs, navel, heart, neck, throat, the soft palate, nose, between the eyebrows, and on the top of the head, at these twelve places respectively is called *dhāranā*. Concentrate the mind on the consciousness inside and then meditate the on the *iṣṭā-devatā* within the *jīvātmā*. This is *dhyāna*. *Samādhi* is identifying always the *jīvātmā* and Paramātmā. Thus the sages say. *Samādhi* is of two kinds: *samprajñāta* or *savikalpa*, and *asamprajñāta* or *nirvikalpa*. When the ideas of the knower, knowledge and the thing known remain separate in the consciousness, and yet the mind feels the one *akhanda saccidānanda* Brahman and his heart remains there, that is called *samprajñāta-samādhi;* and when those three vanish away and only the one Brahman remains, it is called *asamprajñāta-samādhi*.

Thus I have described to you *yoga* with its eight limbs. O mountain! This body composed of the five elements, and with *jīva* endowed with the essence of the Sun, the Moon, the Fire and Brahman in it as one and the same, is denominated by the term *viśva*. There are the 350,000 *nādīs* in this body of man; of these, the principal are ten. Out of the ten again, three are most prominent. The foremost and first of these three is *suśumnā*, of the nature of the Moon, Sun and Fire, situated in the center of the spinal cord. It extends from the sacral plexus below to the *brahmaradhra* at the top of the head where it looks like a blown Dhustūra flower. On the left of this *suśumnā* is the *idā-nādī*, white and looking like Moon; this *nādī* is of the nature of Force, nectar-like. On the right side of the suśumnā is the *piṅgalā-nādī* of the nature of a male; it represents the Sun. The *suśumnā* comprises the nature of the all the *tejas* (fires) and it represents Fire.

31-41. The inmost of *suśumnā* is *vichtrā* or *citrinī-bhūliṅgam nādī,* of the form of a cobweb, in the middle of which resides the *iccā* (will), *jñāṇa* (knowledge) and *kriyā* (action) *śaktīs*, and resplendent like millions of Suns. Above him is situated *hṛīṁ*, the Māyā-*bīja harātmā* with *ha* and *candrabindu* repesenting subtle sound (*nāda*). Above this is the Flame, Kula-Kuṇḍalinī (the Serpent Fire) of a red color, and as it were, intoxicated. Outside Her is the *ādhāra* lotus of a yellow color having a dimension of four digits and

comprising the four letters *va, śa, sa* and *sa*. The *yogīs* meditate on this. In its center is the hexagonal space (*pītham*). This is called the *mūlādhāra-cakra,* for it is the base and it supports all the six lotuses. Above it is the *svādhisthāna-cakra*, fiery and emitting luster like diamond and with six petals representing the six letters *ba, bha, ma, ya, ra* and *la*. The word *sva* means *param-liṅgam* (superior male symbol). Therefore the sages call this *svādhisthāna-cakra*. Above it is situated the *maṇipura-cakram* of the color of lightning in clouds and very fiery; it comprises ten petals, with the 10 letters *da, dha, na, ta, tha, da, dha, na, pa* and *pha*. The lotus resembles a full blown pearl; hence it is *maṇipadma*. Viṣṇu dwells here. Meditation here leads to the sight of Viṣṇu. Above it is *anāhata-padma* with the twelve petals representing, the twelve letters *ka, kha, gha, dha, ṅa, ca, cha, ja, jha, ña, ṭa* and *ṭha*. In the middle is *bāna-liṅgam*, resplendent like the Sun. This lotus emits the sound *śabda-brahman* without being struck; therefore it is called the *anāhata* lotus. This is the source of joy. Here dwells Rudra, the Highest Person.

42-43. Above it is situated the *viśuddha-cakra* of sixteen petals, comprising the sixteen letters *a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, ṛ, ṝ, ḷ, ḹ, e, ai, o, au, ṁ* and *ḥ*. This is of a smoky color, highly lustrous, and is situated in the throat. The *jīvātmā* sees the Paramātmā (the Highest Self) here and it is purified; hence it is called *viśuddha*. This wonderful lotus is termed *ākāśa*.

44-45. Above that is situated betwixt the eyebrows the exceedingly beautiful *ajñā-cakra* with two petals comprising the two letters *ha* and *kṣa*. The Self resides in this lotus. When persons are stationed here, they can see everything and know of the present, past and future. There one gets the commands from the Highest Deity—'now this is for you to do' and so on—therefore it is called the *ajñā-cakra*.

46-47. Above that is the *kailāśa-cakra;* over it is the *rodhinī-cakra*. O one of good vows! Thus I have described to you all about the *ādhāra-cakras*. The prominent *yogīs* say that above that again is the *bindu-sthān*, the seat of the Supreme Deity with a thousand petals. O best of mountains! Thus I declare the best of the paths leading to *yoga*.

48. Now hear what is the next thing to do. First by the *pūraka-prāṇāyāma*, fix the mind on the *mulādhāra* lotus. Then contract and arouse the *kula-kuṇḍalinī śaktī* there, between the anus and the genital organs, by that *vāyu*.

49. Pierce, then, the *liṅgams*—the lustrous *svayambhu ādi liṅgam*—in the several *cakras* above-mentioned and transfer along with it the heart, united with the Śakti, to the *sahasrāra,* the thousand-petalled lotus. Then meditate the Śaktī united with Śambhu there.

50-51. There is produced in the *bindu-cakra*, out of the intercourse of Śiva and Śaktī, a kind of nectar-juice, resembling a sort of red dye (lac). With that Nectar of Joy, the wise *yogīs* make the Māyā-śaktī, yielding successes in *yoga*, drink; then pleasing all the Devas in the six *cakras* with the offerings of that nectar, the *yogī* brings the *śaktī* down again to the *mūlādhāra* lotus.

52. Thus by daily practicing this, all the above *mantras* will no doubt, be made to come to complete success.

53-54. And one will be free from this *saṁsāra*, filled with old age and death, etc. O lord of mountains! I am the World Mother; My devotee will get all My qualities; there is no doubt about this. O child! I have thus described to you the excellent *yoga* by holding the *vāyu.*

55. Now hear from Me the *dhārānā-yoga*. To fix thoroughly one's heart on the supremely lustrous Force of Mine, pervading all the quarters, countries, and all time leads soon to the union of the *jīva* and Brahman.

56-58. If one does not quickly do this, owing to impurities of heart, then the *yogī* ought to adopt what is called the *avayava-yoga*. O chief of mountains! The *sādhaka* should fix his heart on my gentle hands, feet and other limbs one by one and try to conquer each of these places. Thereby his heart would be purified. Then he should fix that purified heart on My whole body.

59-62. The practicer must practice the *mantram* with *japam* and *homam* until his mind be dissolved in Me, My consciousness. By the practice of

meditating on the mantra, the thing to be known (Brahman) is transformed into knowledge. Know this as certain, that the *mantra* is futile without *yoga,* and *yoga* is futile without the *mantra*. *Mantra* and *yoga* are the two infallible means to realize Brahman. As the jar in a dark room is visible by a lamp, so this *jīvātmā* surrounded by Māyā is visible by means of *mantra* to the Paramātmā, the Highest Self. O best of mountains! Thus I have described to you the *yogas* with their *aṅgas* (limbs). You should receive instructions about them from the mouth of a *guru;* else millions of *śāstras* will never be able to give you a true realization of the meanings of the *yogas*.

Here ends the Thirty-fifth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the Yoga and the Mantra Siddhi in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXVI—the Highest Knowledge of Brahman

1-4. Śri Devī said: "O Himālayas! Thus making one's own self attached to *yoga* by the above-mentioned process and sitting in *yogāsana*, one should meditate on My Brahma-nature with unfeigned devotion. How the knowledge of that formless existence and imperishable Brahman arises, now hear. He is maṇifest—near, yea, even moving in the hearts of all beings. He is the well-known Highest Goal. Know that all this whatever—waking, dreaming, or sleeping—that moves, breathes or blinks, is founded on Him. He is higher than Being and Nonbeing; higher even than wisdom. He is the best object of adoration for all creatures. He is brilliant, smaller than the smallest, and in Him the worlds are founded and the rulers thereof. He is the imperishable Brahman. He is the Creator, Life, the Revealer of sacred knowledge, speech, and the Omniscient Cosmic Mind. This is the Truth. He is immortal, O Saumya! Know that He is the target to be hit.

Note: "Higher than wisdom" means higher than Brahmā. Brahmā is the highest of all *jīvas*, so higher than Brahmā means higher than all creatures. The word *vijñāṇa* denotes Brahmā, as we find in the following speech of

Brahmā in the *Bhāgavat Purāṇa:* "I, the Wisdom Energy (*vijñāṇa-śakti*) was born from the navel of this Being resting on the Waters and possessed of the Infinite Powers."

Viṣṇu is called *prāṇa* because He is the leader of all, *prāṇa-netri*. He is called *vāk*, because He is the Teacher of all; Viṣṇu is called *manas* because He is the adviser of all (*mantri*). He is the Controller of all the *jīvas*.

The third verse lays down that Brahman is to be meditated upon or that *manana* should be performed; as the second verse teaches that *dhyāna* or concentration also is necessary.

5-6. Take hold of the Mystic Name as the bow, and know that Brahman is the aim to be hit. Put on this great weapon *āūm̊*, the arrow of the mind sharpened by meditation. Withdraw thyself from all objects, and with the mind absorbed in the idea of Brahman, hit the aim; for know, O Saumya! That Imperishable alone to be the mark. The Great name *āūm̊* is the bow, the mind is the arrow, and the Brahman is said to be the mark. It is to be hit by a man whose thoughts are concentrated, for then he enters the target. Thus *śravana*, *manana* and *dhyāna* of Brahman have been taught. This is the method of Brahma-*upāsanā*.

7. In Him are woven the heavens, and the interspaces, and mingle also with the senses. Know Him to be the one Support of all, the *ātman*. Leave off all other words as well as the worship of other Deities. This *ātman* is the refuge of the Immortals.

"He is the bridge of the Immortal"—the word *amṛta,* deathless or Immortal means the *mukta-jīvas*. In *Vedānta-sūtra* 1.3.2, it has been taught that Brahman is the refuge of the *muktas*. So also that "He is the highest goal of the *muktas*."

8-9. In Him the life-webs (*nādīs*) are fastened, as the spokes to the nave of a chariot; He is *ātman* that pervades the heart, and by His own free will maṇifests Himself in diverse ways (as *viśva, taijasa*, etc., in the waking, sleeping, etc., states); and also as One as *prājña* in the dreamless state.

Meditate on the *ātman* as *āūṁ*, full of all auspicious qualities and the chief aim of the *Vedas*, in order to acquire the knowledge of the Paramātman, Who is beyond the Prakṛti and the Śrī Tattva. Your welfare consists in such knowledge.

Note: This shows that Brahman is the Antaryāmin Puruṣa. He resides in the heart where all the *nādīs* meet, as the spokes meet in the navel of the wheel. He moves within the organs, not for His own pleasure, but to give life and energy to them all. The *āūṁ,* with all its attributes must be constantly meditated upon. He maṇifests Himself in maṇifold ways in the waking and dreaming views as *viśva* and *taijasa;* while He maṇifests as One in the state of *suśupti* or Dreamless sleep as *prājñā*. He is beyond darkness; He has no mortal body. Meditate on such Viṣṇu in the heart in order to get the Supreme Brahman, with the help of the *mantra āūṁ*. The result of such meditation is your welfare—all evils will cease, and you will get the bliss of the maṇifestation of the Divinity—your Real Self within your Heart.

10. He who is All-Wise, and All-Knowing, whose Greatness is thus maṇifested in the worlds, is to be meditated upon as the *ātman* residing in the Ether, in the Fourth-Dimensional Space, in the shining city of Brahman, the Heart. He is the Controller of the mind and the Guide of the senses and the body. He abides in the dense body, controlling the heart. He, the *ātman*, when maṇifesting Himself as blissful and immortal, is seen by the wise through the purity of the heart.

11. The fetters of the *jīvas* are cut asunder, the ties of *liṅga-dehas* and *prakṛti* are removed, the effects of all his works perish, when He is seen who is Supremely High or when the Supremely High looks at the *jīva*.

Note: This last verse shows the result of Divine Wisdom. *Avidyā* covers both Īśvarā and *jīva*. It prevents Īśvara being seen by *jīva*, and *jīva* seeing Īśvara. It is a direct bondage of *jīva* and a metaphorical fetter of Īśvara. *Avidyā* is the name given to Prakṛti in Her active state, when Her three qualities *sattva, rājas* and *tamas* are actively maṇifest. Destruction of *avidyā* means putting these *guṇas* into their latent state. There is a great difference

between the destruction of the *avidyā*-fetters as taught in this verse, and the loosening of them as previously described. There *avidyā* still remained, for it was merely a *parokṣa* or intellectual apprehension of Truth. Here *avidyā* itself is destroyed by *aparokṣa* or intuitive knowledge of Brahman.

The bonds are five: the lowest is the *avidyā* bond, then the *liṅga-deha* bond, then the *pramācchādaka-prakṛti* bond, the *kāma* bond and the *karma* bond. When all these bonds are destroyed, then the *jñānī* goes by the Path of Light to the *sāntāmka-loka*. Before proceeding further all have to *savīnā* the *śiśumāra*—the Dweller on the threshhold—the hub of the Universe.

The *siśumāra* literally means the infant killer, and indicates the porpoise and is the name of a constellation near the North Pole. It corresponds perhaps with the Draco or the Ursā Minor. For a fuller description of it, see *Bhagavat Purāṇa* 5.23. Here it is a mystical reference to a Being of an exalted order, which every *jñānī* passes by, in his way beyond this Universe. It is the name of Hari, also, as we find the following verse "The Supreme Hari, the Support of infinity of worlds and who is called *Siśumāra*, is *savīnād* by all knowers of Brahman, on their way to the Supreme God.

12. The Brahman called *Siśumāra* free from all passions and parts, maṇifests in the external world in the highest Golden Sheath, the Cosmic Egg. That is pure, that is the highest of Lights, it is that which the knowers of *ātmān* know. He is the Center of the Cosmos as Siśumāra, the Light of all Cosmic Suns. He is even in the center of our Sun and illumining all planets.

In the first respect He is meditated upon as Siśumara and in the second, as Gāyatrī. In man, Brahman maṇifests in the heart or the Auric Egg, called the City of Brahman. In the Universe, He maṇifests Himself in the Cosmic Egg, called the Golden Sheath. These are the two places where Brahman may be meditated upon.

This verse has been explained in two different ways: First, as applying to *śiśumāra* and secondly, as teaching how to meditate on Nārāyaṇa in the Sun. The Golden Sheath would then mean the Solar sphere. The Supremely

High Brahman resides in the excellent Golden Sheath. He is pure and without parts.

13. The Sun does not shine there in His Presence nor the Moon and Stars; for His Light is greater than theirs, they appear as if dark in that effulgence, like a candle in the Sun. Nor does lightning, and much less fire shine there. When He shines, everything shines after Him; by His Light all this becomes maṇifest. This whole Universe reveals His Light.

14. The Eternally Free is verily this Brahman only. He is in the East, the West, in the North and the South, in the Zenith and the Nadir. The Brahman alone is; it is He who pervades all directions. This Brahman alone is it who pervades. This Brahman alone is the Fullness that exists in Eternity. This Brahman is the Best; this Brahman is alone the *viśvam,* Infinity or Full (*pūrṇam*). This alone is the Best, the Highest of all.

15-16. The man who realizes thus is satisfied and has all that he wants to do and is considered as the best. He becomes Brahman and his Self is pleased and he neither wants anything nor becomes sorry. O King! Fear comes from the idea of a second; where there is no second, fear does not exist. No danger then arises for him to be separated from Me. Nor can I also get separated from Him.

17. O Himālayas! Know that I am He and He is I. Know that I am seen there wherever My *jñānī* resides.

18. Neither I dwell in any sacred place of pilgrimage, nor do I live in Kailāsa nor in Vaikuṇṭha nor in any other place. I dwell in the heart lotus of My *jñānī*.

19. The blessed man who worships once My *jñānī* gets *koti* (10,000,000) times the fruit of worshipping Me. His family is rendered pure and his mother becomes blessed. He whose heart is one with the all-pervading Brahma Consciousness purifies this whole world. There is no doubt about this.

20. O Best of Mountains! I have now told everything that you asked about *brahma-jñāṇa*. Nothing now remains to be further described.

21. This *brahma-vidyā,* the science of the knowledge of Brahman, is to be imparted to the eldest son who is devoted and of good character, and to him who is endowed with the good qualities as enumerated in the *śāstras,* and not to be given to any other person.

22. He who is fully devoted to his *iṣṭā-devatā* and who is equally devoted to his *guru*, to him the high-minded persons should declare the *brahma-vidyā*.

23. Verily, he is God himself, who advises this *brahma-vidyā;* no one is able to repay the debts due to him.

24. He who gives birth in Brahman to a man, is no doubt superior to the ordinary father; for the birth that a father gives is destroyed; but the birth in Brahman that is given by the *guru* is never destroyed.

25. So the *śruti* says: 'Never do harm to the *guru* who imparts the knowledge of Brahman.'

26. In all the *siddhāntas,* the decided conclusions of the *śāstras*, it is stated that the *guru* who imparts the knowledge of Brahman is the best and the most honorable. If Śiva becomes angry, the *guru* can save; but when the *guru* becomes angry, even Śaṅkara cannot save. So the *guru* should be served with the utmost care.

27. So the *guru* must be served with all the care possible by body, mind, and word; one should always please him. Otherwise one becomes ungrateful and cannot be saved.

28. O best of mountains! It is very difficult to acquire *brahma-jñāṇa*. Hear a story. A Muni named Dadhyam of Atharvana family went to Indra and prayed to him to give *brahma-jñāṇa*. Indra said: 'I would give you *brahma-jñāṇa*, but if you impart it to any other person, I would sever your head.' Dadhyarna agreed to this and Indra gave him the *brahma-jñāṇa*. After a few days, the two Aśvins came to the Muni and prayed for *brahma-jñāṇa*, The

Muni said: 'If I give you the *brahma-jñāṇa*, Indra will cut off my head.' Hearing this the two Aśvins said: 'We will cut your head and keep it elsewhere, and we will attach the head of a horse to your body. Instruct us with the mouth of this horse and when Indra will cut off this mouth, we will replace your former head.' When they said so, the Muni gave them the *brahma-jñāṇa*. Indra cut off his head by his thunderbolt. When the horse-head of the Muni was cut off, the two physicians of the Devas replaced his original head. This is widely known in all the *Vedas*.

O chief of mountains! He becomes blessed who gets this the *brahma-vidyā*."

Here ends theThirty-sixth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the Highest Knowledge of Brahma in the MahāPurāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXVII—Bhakti Yoga

1. The Himālayas said: "O Mother! Now describe your *bhaki-yoga*, by which ordinary men who have no dispassion get the knowledge of Brahman easily."

2-10. The Devī said: "O Chief of Mountains! There are three widely-known paths leading to the final liberation, *mokṣa*. These are *karma-yoga, jñāṇa-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*. Of these three, *bhakti-yoga* is the easiest in all respects; people can do it very well without incurring any suffering to the body, and bring the mind to a perfect concentration. This *bhakti-yoga* (devotion) again is of three kinds as the *guṇas* are three. His *bhakti* is *tāmasī* who worships Me to pain others, being filled with vanity, jealousy and anger. That *bhakti* is *rājāsik*, when one worships Me for one's own welfare and does not intend to do harm or good to others. He has got some desire or end in view, to attain some fame or some objects of enjoyment and ignorantly, thinking himself different from Me, worships Me with great devotion. Again that *bhakti* is *sāttvikī* when one worships Me to purify his sins, and offers to Me the result of all his *karmas*, thinking that *jīva* and Īśvara are separate, knowing that this action of his is authorized in the *Vedas* and therefore

must be observed. This *sāttvikī-bhakti* is different from the supreme *uttama-bhakti,* as the worshippers think Me separate; but it leads to *uttama-bhakti*. The other two types of *bhakti* do not lead to *parā-bhakti: uttama-bhakti,* the Supreme Bhakti or Highest unselfish Love.

11-20. Now hear attentively about the *parā-bhakti* that I am now describing to you. He is a *parā-bhakta* who hears always My glories, recites My Name and whose mind dwells always, like an incessant flow of oil, in Me Who is the receptacle of all auspicious qualities and *guṇas*. But he has not the least trace of any desire to get the fruits of his *karma;* yea he does not want *sāmīpya, sārṣṭi, sāyujya, sālokya* or other forms of liberation! He becomes filled with devotion for Me alone, worships Me only; knows nothing higher than to serve Me and he does not even want final liberation. He does not like to forsake this idea of *sevya* (to serve) and *sevaka* (servant who serves). He always meditates on Me with constant vigilance and actuated by a feeling of Supreme Devotion; he does not think himself separate from Me but rather thinks himself "I am the Bhagavatī." He considers all the *jīvas* as Myself, and loves Me as he loves himself. He does not make any difference between the *jīvas* and Myself, as he finds the same *caitanya* everywhere and mainfested in all. He does not quarrel with anybody as he has abandoned all ideas about separateness; he bows down and worships even the *caṇḍālas* and all the *jīvas*. He who becomes filled with devotion to Me whenever he sees My place, My devotees, and hears the *śāstras* describing My deeds, and whenever he meditates on My *mantras*, becomes filled with the highest love, and his hairs stand on their ends out of love to Me, and tears of love flow incessantly from both his eyes. He recites My name and My deeds in a voice, choked with feelings of love for Me. The *parā-prema-bhakti* is like the maddening rush of a river to the ocean; thence in the shape of vapor to the highest Himālayan Mountain peaks to be congealed into snow where various plays of bright colors take place.

21-30. O lord of the mountains! He worships Me with intense feeling as the Mother of this Universe and the Cause of all causes. He performs the daily and occasional duties and all My vows and sacrifices without showing any

miserly feeling in his expenditure of money. He naturally longs to perform My festivities and to visit places where My *utsavas* are held. He sings My name loudly and dances, being intoxicated with My love, and has no idea of egotism and is devoid of his body-concept, thinking that the body is not his. He thinks that whatever is *prārabdha,* the results of acts done in his previous lives, must come to pass and therefore does not become agitated about the preservation of his body and soul.

This sort of *bhakti* is called *parā-bhakti* or the Highest Devotion. Here the predominant idea is the idea of the Devī, and no other idea takes its place. O Mountain! He gets immediately dissolved in My Nature of Consciousness whose heart is really filled with such *parā-bhakti* or All-Love. The sages call the limiting stage of this devotion and dispassion as *jñāṇa*. When this *jñāṇa* arises, *bhakti* and dispassion get their ends satisfied. Yea! He goes then to the Maṇidvīpa, when his *ahaṅkāra* does not crop up by his *prārabdba-karma*, though he did not fail to give up his life in devotion. O Mountain! That man enjoys there all the objects of enjoyments, though unwilling and at the end of the period, gets the knowledge of My Consciousness. By that he attains the Final Liberation forever. Without this *jñāṇa*, the Final Liberation is impossible.

31-33. He realizes *parā-brahman* who gets in this body of his the above *jñāṇa* of the *pratyak-ātmā* in his heart; when his *prāṇa* leaves his body, he does not get rebirth. The *śruti* says: 'He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman.' In the logic of *kantha-cāmīkara* (gold on the neck) the ignorance vanishes. When this ignorance is destroyed by knowledge, he attains all knowledge of the object to be attained, when he recognizes the gold on his neck.

34-37. O best of mountains! This My consciousness is different from the perceived and unperceived Māyā. The image of this Paramātmā is seen in bodies other than the *ātmā* as the image falls in a mirror; as the image falls in water, so this Paramātmā is seen in the *pitṛlokas*. As the shadow and light are quite distinct, so in My Maṇidvīpa, the knowledge of oneness without a second arises. That man resides in the *brahma-loka* for the period of a *kalpa* who leaves his body without attaining *jñāṇa*, though he had *vaīrāgyam*.

Then he takes his birth in the family of a pure prosperous family and practicing again his *yoga* habits, gets My Consciousness.

38-45. O King of Mountains! This *jñāṇa* arises after many births; it does not come in one birth; so one should try one's best to get this *jñāṇa*. If, attaining this rare human birth, one does not attain this *jñāṇa*, know that a great calamity has befallen to him. For this human birth is very hard to attain; and then the birth in a Brāhmaṇa family is rarer; moreover amongst the Brāhmaṇas, the knowledge of the *Veda* and consciousness is exceedingly rare. Attaining the six qualities, which are considered as six types of wealth, restraint of passions, etc.; success in *yoga* and the acquisition of a pure real *guru*—all these are very hard to attain in this life. O Mountain! The maturity and the activities of the organs of the senses, and the purification of the body according to the Vedic rites are all very difficult to attain. Know this again that to get a desire for final liberation is acquired by the merits acquired in many births. That man's birth is entirely futile, who attaining all the above qualifications does not try his best to attain this *jñāṇa*. So one should try one's best to acquire *jñāṇa*. Then at every moment, he gets the fruits of the Aśvamedha sacrifice. There is no doubt about this. As ghee (clarified butter) resides potentially in milk, so the *vijñāṇa-brahman* resides in every body. So make the mind the churning rod and always churn with it. Then, by slow degrees, the knowledge of Brahman will be attained.

Man attains blessedness when he gets this *jñāṇa;* so the *Vedānta* says. Thus I have described to you in brief, O King of Mountains! all that you wanted to hear. Now what more do you want?"

Here ends the Thirty-seventh Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the glories of Bhakti in the Mahā Purāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXVIII—Vows and Sacred Places of the Devī

1-2. The Himālayas said: "O Devī! Describe the places on this earth that are prominent, sacred, and worth visiting and which Thou likest best. O Mother! Also sanctify us by describing the vows and *utsavas* that are pleasing to Thee, and by performing which, men become blessed and get themselves satisfied."

3-10. The Devī spoke: "O Himavan! All the places that are on this earth are all Mine and all should be visited. And every moment is fit for taking vows and *utsavas*. For I am of the nature pervading every moment; so whatever actions are performed at any moment are all equal to taking My vows and *utsavas*. O King of Mountains! Still I am now telling something out of My affection to My *bhaktas*. Hear. There is a great place of pilgrimage named Kolhāpura in the southern country. Here the Devilakṣmī always dwells. The second place is Mātripura in the Sahyādrī mountain; here the Devī Renukā dwells. The third place is Tulajāpur; next is the place Saptaśringa, the great places of Hingulā and Jvālā Mukhī. Then the great places of Sākambharī, Bhrāmāri, Śrīraktadantikā and Dūrgā. The best of all places is that of Vindhyāchala Vāsinī, the great places of Annapurnā and the excellent Kānchipur (Conjiverum). Next come the places of Bhīmā Devī, Vimalā Devī, Śrī Chandralā Devī of Karnāt, and the place of Kauśikī. Then the great place of Nīlāmbā on the top of the Nīlāparvata, the place of Jāmbūnadeśvarī, and the beautiful Śrīnagara.

11-20. The great place of Śrī Guhya Kālī, well established in Nepal, and that of Śrī Mīnāksī Devī established in Chīdambaram. The great place named Vedāranya where the Sundarī Devī is residing; then the place named Ekāmvaram, and the place Bhuvaneśvara near Purusottama where I always dwell as Parā-Śakti Bhuvaneśvarī. The famous place of Mahālasā, known in the south by the name Mallāri; the place of Yogeśvarī Varāt, and the widely known place of Nīla śarasvatī in China. The excellent place of Bagalā in Baidyanāth, the supreme place Maṇidvīpa of Śrīṁatī Bhuvaneśvarī where I always reside. The Yonimaṇḍala Kāmākhyā, the

place of Śrīṁatī Tripurā Bhairavī, the excellent of all the places in this earth, where the Devī Mahā-Māyā always dwells. There is no other place better than this on the earth. Here the Devī becomes every month in Her course of menstruation and where the virtuous men are seen. Here all the Devas remain in the form of mountains and where on the mountains the excellent Devas inhabit. The sages say: That all the places there are of the nature of the Devī; there is no better place than this Kāmākhyā Yonimaṇḍala. Puṣkara, the sacred place, is the seat of Gāyatrī; the place of Caṇḍikā in Amareśa: and the excellent place of Puskareksinī in Frabhāsa. The place of Liṅga-dhārinī Devī in Naimiṣāranya, and the place of Purubutā in Puskarākṣa; Rati dwells in Āsādhī.

21-30. Dandinī Parameśvari dwells in Chhandamundī. Bhūti dwells in Bhārabhūti; and Nakuleśvarī dwells in Nākula. Chandrikā dwells in Hariścandra; Śānkari in Śrīgiri; Triśūlā in Japeśvara; and Suksmā in āmrāta Keśvara. Śānkarī dwells in Ujjain, śarvānī in the place Madhyamā, and Mārga Dāyini dwells in the holy Kṣetra Kedāra. The celebrated Bhairavī dwells in the place named Bhairava; Maṅgalā in Gayā Kṣetra; Sthānupriyā in Kurukṣetra; and Svāyambhuvī Devī dwells in Nākula; Ugrā dwells in Kankhal; Viśvesā dwells in Vimaleśvara, Mahānandā in Attahāsa and Mahāntakā in Mahendra. Bhimeśvarī dwells in Bhīma; the Bhavānī Śaṅkarī dwells in Vastrāpadma; and Rudrānī in Ardha Kotī. Viśalāksī dwells in Avimukta; Mahābhāgā dwells in Mahālaya; Bhadrakarnī in Gokarṇa; and Bhadrā resides in Bhadrakarṇak; Utpalāksī dwells in Suvarnāksa; Sthānvīśā in Sthānu; Kāmalā in Kāmalālayā; Chandā in Chhagalandaka, situated in the south near the sea coast. Trisandhyā dwells in Kurundala; Mukuteśvarī in Mākota; śāndakī in Mandaleśa; Kālī in Kālanjara; Dhvani in Śankukarṇa; Sthūlā in Sthūlakeśvara; and Parameśvarī Hṛllekhā dwells in the heart lotuses of the *jñāṇins*.

31-34. The places mentioned above are all dearest to the Devī. First the merits of these places are to be heard; next the Devī is to be worshipped by the rites and ceremonies according to these rules. Or, O Mountain! All the holy places of pilgrimages exist in Kāśī. The Devī always dwells there.

Persons devoted to the Devī see these places and if they make *japam* and meditate on the lotus feet of the Devī, they will certainly be freed from the bonds of *saṁsāra*; there is no doubt about this. If anybody getting up in the morning recites the names of these places, all his sins would instantly be burnt away.

35-40. And if one reads, at the time of *śrāddha*, before the Brāhmaṇas, these holy names of the Devī, his *pitṛs* will be purified of their sins in the Mahākāśa by the Mahā-Prāṇa and will get their highest goal.

O one of good vows! I will now describe to you the vows that are to be carefully observed by men and women; hear. *Ananta-tritīyākhya-vrata* (vow), *rasakalyānī-vrata*, and *ārdrānandakara-vrata*—these three *vratas* are to be observed in the *tritīyā-tithi* (third day of the bright or dark fortnight). Next come the Friday vow, the *kṛṣṇa-caturdaśi* vows, the Tuesday vow and the evening twilight vow. In this twilight vow, Mahādeva placed the Devī in the evening on an *āsana;* and He, along with the other Devas, began to dance before Her. Fasting is enjoined in this vow; and then in the evening one must worship the Devī, the Giver of all auspicious things. Especially if the Devī be worshipped in every fortnight, She gets extremely pleased.

41. O best of mountains! The Monday vow is very agreeable to Me; the worship of the Devī should be done, and then in the night one must take one's food.

42-43. The two nine-night vow called Navarātra are to be observed, one in the autumn and the other in the spring season. These are very dear to Me. He is certainly My devotee and very dear who performs these and the other Nitya Naimittik vows for My satisfaction, free from any pride and jealousy. He certainly gets the *sājujya-mukti* with Me.

44-46. O Nagarāja! The Holi (Dol-yatra) festival in the month of *Chaitra*, on the third day of the white fortnight is very pleasing to Me, and should be observed by all. My devotees perform the *śayanotsava* in the Paurnāmāsī in the month of *Āsādha;* the Jāgaranotsava in the Paurnamāsī in the month of

Kārtik, the Ratha-yātrā in the 3rd of the white fortnight in *Āsādha*; the Damanotsava in *Chaitra*. And my dear festivals in the month of *Śrāvana* and various other festivals.

47-49. In all these festivals one should feast well with gladness all My devotees, and the *kumāris* (virgins), well clothed and dressed, and the boys, thinking them all to be of My very nature. No miserliness is to be entertained, and I should be worshipped with flowers, etc. He is blessed and attains his goal and is dear to Me who carefully and devotedly observes every year all these festivals. O Nagendra! Thus I have described to you in brief all the vows that are pleasing to Me. These instructions are not to be given to one who is not a disciple nor to one who is not My devotee."

Here ends the Thirty-eighth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the vows and the sacred places of the Devī in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXIX—Worship of the World Mother

1. The Himālayas said: "O Devī! O Maheśvari! O Thou, the Ocean of Mercy! O World Mother! Now describe in detail how Thy worship is conducted, the rules and ceremonials thereof."

2-20. The Devī said: "O King of Mountains! I now describe to you the rites and ceremonies and the methods of My worship that are pleasing to Me. Hear it attentively and with faith. My worship is of two kinds: external and internal. The external worship is again twofold: one is Vaidik, and the other is Tāntrik. The Vaidik worship is also of two kinds according to the differences in My forms. Those who are initiated in the Vedic *mantrams* worship according to the Vedic rites and ceremonies, and those who are initiated in the Tāntrik *mantram* worship according to the Tāntrik rites. That stupid man is entirely ruined and goes to Hell who knowing the secrets of worship, act contrary to them.

First I will describe to you the Vaidik worship; hear. The highest form of Mine that you saw before, with innumerable heads, innumerable eyes, innumerable feet, and the illuminer of the intelligences of all the *jīvas*, endowed with all powers, Higher than the Highest, very grand, worship That, bow down to That and meditate on That. O Nagendra! This is the first form of worship that I describe to you. With your senses controlled, peaceful, with a well-concentrated mind, void of egotism and vanity, and devoted to That, perform sacrifices to That, take refuge of That, see That within the temple of your mind, and always recite Her name and meditate on That. Take hold of Me and My ideas with one-pointed loving devotion, and please Me with the performance of sacrifices, austerities and gifts. By My Grace, you will no doubt be able to get the Final Liberation. Whoever is entirely attached to Me, thinking Me as the Highest, is the foremost amongst the *bhaktas*. I promise that I will certainly deliver him from this ocean of the world. O King of mountains! Meditation with *karma* and *jñāṇa* with *bhakti* will lead one to Me. Only the work alone will fail to get one to Me. O Himavan! From *dharma* arises *bhakti,* and from *bhakti* arises the highest *jñāṇa*. What are said in the *śruti* and *smṛti-śastras,* the Mahārṣis take that as the *dharma;* and what are written in other *śastras* they take them to be *dharmābhāsa,* the shadow or reflection of *dharma*. Out of My omniscient and omnipotent nature, the *Vedas* have come. Owing to the want of ignorance in Me, the *Vedas* can never be invalidated. The *smṛtis* are formed out of the meaning of the *Vedas;* so the *smṛti* and *Purāṇas*, formed by Manu and the other Ṛṣis, are authoritative. In some places it is hinted that there other *śastras* than the *Vedas*, taking the *Tantras* indirectly into account. Although the matters relating to *dharma* are mentioned therein, but as they are apparently contrary to the *śrutis*, the *Tantras* are not accepted by the Vaidik Paṇḍitas. The other *śāstra* makers are marked with their ignorance; so their sayings cannot be authoritative. Therefore he who want the final liberation must resort entirely to the *Vedas*. As the king's order is never disobeyed amongst his subjects, so the *śruti*, My commands, the Lord of all, can never be abandoned by men.

21-30. To preserve My commandments, I have created the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya castes. My secrets are all embodied in the *śrutis*. For that reason, the words of the *śrutis* are no doubt to be known and observed by the sages. O Mountain! When *dharma* (righteousness) declines and *adharma* (unrighteousness) reigns supreme, I then maṇifest Myself in the world as Sākambharī, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and others. Therefore the Devas, the preservers of the *Vedas*, and the Daityas, the destroyers of the *Vedas* are classified. Whoever does not practice according to the *Vedas*, I have created many hells for their lessons. When the sinners hear of those hells, they get extremely terrified. The king should banish those stupid persons from his kingdom and the Brāhmaṇas should not talk with them, nor take them in their own lines nor when partaking of food, those who forsake the Vaidik *dharma* and go for shelter to another *dharma*. The *śāstras* that are extant, as contrary to the *śrutis* and *smṛtis*, are all *tāmasa-śāstras*. Mahādeva has framed these Vāma, Kāpālak, Kaulaks, Bhairava and suchlike *śastras* for fascinating the people; else he has no object in framing them. Those Brāhmaṇas that were burnt up by the curses of Dakṣa, Śukra and Dadhīchi and were banished from the path of the *Vedas*, it is for delivering them, step-by-step that Mahādeva has framed the five *āgamas: śaiva, vaiṣṇava, śaura, śātta* and *gānapatya-śāstras*.

31-37. In those *tantra-śāstras*, there are some passages in conformity with the *Vedas* and other passages contradictory to the *Vedas*. If the Vaidik persons resort to passages in conformity with the *Vedas*, then there cannot arise any fault in them. The Brāhmaṇas are not *adhikāris* to those *Tāntrik* texts that are contradictory to the *Vedas*. Those persons that have no claim to the *Vedas* can be *adhikāris* to these latter texts. Therefore the Vaidik Brāhmaṇas should resort to the *Vedas* alone with all care possible and make the Para-brahma of the nature of *jñāṇa* maṇifest within them. The Sannyāsīns, Vānaprasthas, householders and Brāhmachāris should give up all their desires and take refuge in Me; free from egotism and vanity, kind to all creatures, their hearts wholly given to Me and engaged in speaking out My places with enrapt devotion. They always worship My *virāt* (cosmic) form, immersed in the *yoga* called *aiśvarya-yoga*—cosmic *yoga*

dealing with the glories and prosperity of God. Illumine the understanding with the Sun of My consciousness, and I destroy the darkness of ignorance of those persons always engaged in practicing *yoga* with Me. There is no doubt about this. O Nagendra! Thus I have described in brief the methods and practices of the *Vaidik pūjā;* now I will tell you the *Tāntrikī-pūjā;* hear attentively.

38-47. On an image, or a clean plot of ground, or on the Sun or Moon, in water, in *vāna-liṅga*, in *yantra* or on a cloth or in the lotus of heart, one is to meditate and worship the Blissful, Higher than the Highest, the Devī Who creates this universe with the three *guṇas sattva, rājas* and *tamas*; Who is filled with the juice of mercy, Who is blooming in youth, Whose color is red like the rising Sun, Whose beauty overtops to the full, Whose all limbs are exquisitely beautiful, Who is the sentiment of Love Incarnate, Who feels very much the mental pain of Her *bhaktas,* upon Who being pleased, maṇifests Herself before the *bhaktas;* on Whose forehead the crescent Moon shines incessantly, and Whose four hands hold goad, noose and the signs of fearlessness and to grant boons. Until one is entitled to the internal worship, one should worship the external; never he is to abandon it. Worship is internal when one's heart gets immersed in Parabrahman, of the nature of the Universal Consciousness. O Mountain! know My Consciousness (*saṁvit*) to be My Highest Nature without any limitations. Therefore it is highly incumbent to attach one's heart, free from other adjuncts, constantly to this *saṁvit*. And what is more than this *saṁvit* is this illusory world full of Māyā. So to get rid of this world one is to constantly meditate on Me, the Witness of all, the Self of all, with a heart full of devotiou and free from any *saṅkalpas* or desires.

O Best of Mountains! Now I will describe to you in detail the external form of worship. Hear attentively."

Here ends the Thirty-ninth Chapter of tho Seventh Skandha on the worship of the World Mother in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the Mahā-Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XL—External Worship of the Devī

1-5. The Devī said: "Getting up from the bed early in the morning, one is to meditate on the thousand petalled lotus—bright, of the color of camphor—in his brain on the top part of the head. On this he should remember his Śrī Guru, very gracious looking, well decorated with ornaments, with his consort Śakti and bow down to him. Then within himself he should meditate the Kuṇḍalinī Devī thus: 'I take refuge unto that Highest Śakti Kuṇḍalinī, of the nature of Supreme Consciousness, Who is maṇifest as *caitanya* while going up to the *brahmarandhra* at the crown of the head, and Who is of the nature of nectar while returning back in the *suśumnā* canal.' After meditating thus, he should meditate on the blissful form of Mine within the Kuṇḍalinī Fire situated in the *mulādhāra-cakra* (coccygeal lotus). Then he should rise up to go for the calls of nature, etc., and complete *sandhyā-vandanam* and other morning duties. The best of the Brāhmaṇas should then for My satisfaction perform the *agṇihotra-homa* and sitting in his *āsana* make *sankalpa* (determination) to do My *pūjā* (worship).

6-10. Next he is to make *bhūta-śuddhi,* purification of the elements of the body by respiratory attraction and replacement and then the Mātṛkā Nyāsa. Then he should arrange the letters of the *mūla-mantra* of Māyā (*hṛīṁ*) and execute the Hṛllekhā Mātṛkā Nyāsa. In this he is to place the letter *ha* in the *mulādhāra-cakra*, the letter *ṛ* in his heart, the vowel *ī* in the middle of his brows and *hṛīṁ* on the top part of his head. Finishing then all the other *nyāsas* according to that *mantra*, he should think within his body *dharma, jñāṇa, vairāgyam* and prosperity as the four legs of the seat and *adharma, ajñāṇa, avairāgyam* and non-prosperity, these four as the body of the seat on the four quarters East, South, West and North. Then he should meditate on the Great Devī in the lotus of his heart blewn by *prāṇāyāma*, situated on the five seats of the *pretas*. O Mountain! Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Sadā-Śiva and Īśvara are the five *pretas* situated under My feet.

11. These are of the nature of earth, water, fire, air and ether, the five elements, and also of the nature of *jāgrat* (waking), *svapna* (dreaming)

suśupti (deep sleep state) *turīya* (the fourth state) and *atīta-rūpa*, the fifth state. But I, Who am of the nature of Brahman, am over and above the five elements and the five states; therefore My Seat is always on the top of these five forces.

12. Meditating on Me thus and worshipping Me with his mind concentrated, he is next to make *japam,* reciting My Name slowly. After *japam* he is to offer the fruits of *japam* to Me. He should then place the *arghya* for the external worship.

13. Then the worshipper is to purify all the articles of worship that are placed in front of him by sprinkling *arghya* with the *astra-mantra* ***phaṭ***.

14-18. He should close the ten quarters with the *chotikā-mudrā* and bow down to his *guru*. Taking his permission, he should meditate on the outside seat, the beauiful divine form of his heart lotus, invoke the Deity outside, place Her on the seat by *prāṇa-pratisthā* and perforn *āvāhana*, present to Her *arghya* (an offer of green grass, rice, etc., made for worshipping a god), *pādya* (water for washing legs and feet), *ācamana*, water for bath, clothes, all sorts of ornaments, scents, flowers and the necessary articles with due devotion, and he should worship the attendant Deities of the Śrī Yantra. If one be unable to worship daily the attendant deities, one must worship them on Friday.

19. Of the attendant Deities, one must meditate the principal Deity of the nature of *prabhā* (illumination) and think that by Her rays the three worlds are pervaded.

20. Next he should worship again Bhuvaneśvarī Devī, the Chief Deity along with other attendant Deities with scent, good smelling flowers, *naivedya* and various other tasteful dishes.

21-22. He should then recite the *Sahasranāma-stotra* and the Devī-Sūkta *mantra Ahaṁ Rudrebhiḥ* etc., and *Sarve vai Devā Devī mupatasthuḥ*, etc., the Devī Atharva *śiromantra* the Upaniṣad's *mantra* of Bhuvaneśvarī—all the famous *mantras* repeatedly—and thus bring My satisfaction.

23-24. With hearts filled with love and with hairs standing on end, all should satisfy Me frequently with tears of love flowing from their eyes and with voice choked with feelings and with music, singing and dancing, with his whole body filled with joy.

25. My glory is well established in the Veda Pārāyana and in all the Purāṇas. So for My satisfaction, one should offer daily to Me one's everything with one's body and recite the readings from the Vedas.

26-27. Next, after completing the *homa* offerings, he should feed the Brāhmaṇas, the young virgins well clothed, the boys, the public and the poor, thinking all of them to be so many forms of the Devī. Then he should bow before the Devī that resides in his heart, and finally by *samhāra-mudrā* take leave of the Deity invoked.

28. O One of good vows! The Hrīllekhā-*mantra* ***hṛīṁ*** is the chief of all *mantrams;* so My worship and all other actions ought to be performed with this Hrīllekhā-*mantram*.

29. I am always reflected in this mirror of the Hrīllekhā; so anything offered in this Hrīllekhā-*mantra* of Mine is offered as it were with all the *mantras*. Then one should worship the *guru* with ornaments, etc., and think oneself blessed.

30-31. O Himavan! Nothing remains at any time unavailable to him who worships thus the Bhuvaneśvarī Devī. After quitting his body, he goes to Maṇidvīpa, My abode. He gets the form of a Devī, and the Devas constantly bow down to him.

32-45. O Mahīdhara! Thus I have described to you the rules of worshipping the Great Devī; consider this in all the aspects, worship Me according to your *adhikāra* (qualification) and you will attain your goal. There is no doubt about this. O best of mountains! This *śāstra*, Devī-gītā you are not to tell to those who are not devotees, to those who are enemies, and to those who are cunning. If one gives out this secret of Gītā, it is like taking off the covering from the breast of the mother; so carefully keep it secret and think

that this is very necessary. This Devī-Gītā ought to be given to a disciple, a *bhakta*, the eldest son, to one who is good natured, well dressed and devoted to the Devī. O Mountain! In the time of *śrāddha* (solemn obsequies performed in honor of the manes of deceased ancestors) he gets the highest place of the *pitṛs* who reads this Devī-Gītā before the Brāhmaṇas."

Vyāsa said: "The Devī vanished there after describing all these. The Devas were glad and considered themselves blessed by the sight of the Devī. O Janamejaya! The Haimavatī next took Her birth in the house of the Himālaya and was known by the name of Gaurī. Śānkara, the Deva of the Devas, married Her. Sadānana (Kārtika) was born of them. He killed Tādakāsura. O King! In ancient times, when the ocean was churned, many gems were obtained. At that time the Devas chanted hymns to the Devī with a concentrated mind to get Lakṣmī Devī. To show favor to the Devas, Ramā Devī got out of the ocean. The Devas gave Lakṣmī to Viṣṇu, the Lord of the Vaikuṇṭha. Viṣṇu was very glad at this. O King! Thus I have described to you the Greatness of the Devī and the birth of Gaurī and Lakṣmī. One's desires are all fulfilled when one hears this. O King! This secret I have described to you. Take care not to divulge it to any other person. This is the secret of the Gītā; so carefully conceal it. O one of pure heart! I have told to you this Divine and sin-destroying narration, that you asked. What more do you want to hear? Say."

Here ends the Fortieth Chapter of the Seventh Skandha on the External Worship of the Devī in the MahāPurāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa. The Seventh Skandha Completed.

Eighth Skandha

Chapter I—Description of the Worlds

1-4. Janamejaya asked: "O Lord! I have heard all that you have described about the sweet nectar-like characters of the Kings of the Solar and the Lunar dynasties. Now kindly describe the real *tattva* of the *virāt* form of the Great Devī and how She was worshipped in every *manvantara* by the Regent of that *manvantara* and the Kings thereof. In what part of the year and in which place, under what circumstances, in what form and with what *mantras* was the Devī worshipped? I am very anxious to hear all this. O *guru!* In fact describe the gross forms of the Ādyā-Śakti, the Devī Bhagavatī by concentrating attention to which, I can have the power to understand the subtle forms of the Devī and I can get the highest good in this world."

5-7. Vyāsa said: "O King! Now hear. I am describing to you in detail about the worship of the Devī Bhagavatī that leads to the welfare of the whole world, the hearing or practice of which enables one to get the highest good. In days of yore, the Devarṣi Nārada asked Nārāyaṇa about this very point; I will now tell you what Bhagavān, the promulgator of the *yoga-tattva*, advised Nārada. Once on a time the all powerful Devarṣi Nārada, entitled with all the *yogīk* powers and born from the body of Brahmā, was travelling all over this earth and came to the hermitage of the Ṛṣi Nārāyaṇa. Resting a while, and the troubles of the journey over, he bowed down to the *yogī* Nārāyaṇa and asked Him what you ask me now.

7-9. Nārada said: 'O Deva Deva Mahādeva! O Thou, the Ancient Puruṣa, the Excellent One! O Omniscient One! O Thou, the holder of the Universe! O Thou Who art the repository of the good qualities and Who art praised by all!

10-12. O Deva! Now tell me what is the ultimate cause of this Universe: whence has this Universe its origin? And how does it rest? In Whom does it take refuge? Where does it dissolve at the time of *pralaya?* Where do all the *karmas* of these beings go? And what object is that whose knowledge destroys forever *māyā*, the cause of all this *moha* (illusion)? Whose worship, what *japam*, and whose meditation in the lotus of the heart are to he made by which, O Deva! the knowledge of Paramātman rises in the heart, as the darkness of the night vanishes by the rising of the Sun?

13. O Deva! Kindly reply to these my questions in such a clear manner that even the ignorant people in this *saṁsāra* can understand and get themselves across this ocean of *saṁsāra*.'

14-15. Vyāsa said: "Thus asked by the Devaṛṣi, the ancient Nārāyaṇa, the best of the Munis, the great *yogī* gladly spoke: 'O Devaṛṣi! Hear: I will now speak to you all the *tattvas*, knowing which the mortal never falls into the illusion of this world.

16. O child! The original cause of this universe is the Devī Mahā-Māyā, the image of the Supreme Caitanya ParaBrahman; this is the opinion of the Ṛṣis, Devas, Gandharvas and other intelligent persons.

17-23. It is written in the *Vedas* and other *śāstras* that the Devī Bhagavatī, worshipped by all in the universe creates, preserves and destroys the universe by the influence of Her three *guṇas*. I now describe to you the nature of the Devī, worshipped by the Siddhas, Gandharvas and Ṛṣis, the mere remembering of Whom destroys all sins, gives final liberation—*mokṣa,* and *dharma, artha* and *kāma* also. The powerful Svāyambhuva Manu, the first, the husband of Śatarūpā, the prosperous ruler of all the *manvantaras,* worshipped his Father the sinless Prajāpati Brahmā with due devotion and satisfied Him. Then the Grandsire of the *lokas*, the Hiraṇyagarbha spoke to his son: "The excellent worship of the Devī should be done by you. By Her Grace, O son, your work of creating worlds will be successful." Thus spoken by Brahmā, the *vibhu* Svāyambhuva Manu, the *virāt* incarnate, worshipped the World Mother with great austerities. And by his

concentrated devotion, he satisfied the Devī Deveśī and began to chant hymns to Her, the first-born, the Māyā, the Śakti of all, and the Cause of all causes.

24-36. Manu said: “Thou art Brahman, the ocean of the *Vedas*, Kṛṣṇa, the abode of Lakṣmī Purandara. I bow down again and again to Thee, the Deveśī, the origin of Māyā and the cause of this Universe. Thou holdest *śankha* (conchshell), *cakra, gadā*, etc., in Thy hands and Thou residest in the heart of Nārāyaṇa; Thou art the *Vedas* incarnate, the World Mother, the Auspicious One worshipped by all the Devas, and the knower of the three *Vedas*. O Thou, endowed with all powers and glory! O Mahāmāye! Mahābhāge! Mahodaye the Self-maṇifested! Thou residest as the better half of Mahādeva, and Thou doest all what is dear to Him. Thou art the most beloved of Nanda the cowherd king, in the form of Mahā-Māyā, the daughter who concealed Kṛṣṇa, slipped from the hands of Kaṁsa, got up in the air and remained as Vindhyāvāsinī; also in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Thou gavest much pleasure and wert the cause of all the festivities; Thou takest away the fear due to plague, etc.; Thou art worshipped by the Devas. O Thou, the auspicious Bhagavatī! Thou art the welfare of all incarnate; Thou fructifiest the desires of all to success! Thou art the One in Whom all take refuge and Thou removest all their dangers; O Thou the three-eyed! Gaurī! Nārāyaṇī! Obeisance to Thee. I bow down to that ocean of all brightness and splendor, without beginning or end, the One Consciousness, wherein this endless Universe rises and remains interwoven therein. I bow down to the Devī whose gracious glance enables Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara to do their respective works of creating, preserving and destroying the Universe.

O Devī! Thou art the Only One to whom all can bow, since the lotus-born Brahmā, terrified by the horrible Daityas, was freed by Thy prowess only. O Bhagavatī! Thou art modesty, fame, memory, luster; Thou art Lakṣmī, Girijā, the daughter of Himālaya; Thou art Dakṣa’s daughter Satī; Thou art the Sāvitrī the Mother of the *Vedas*; Thou art the intelligence of all and Thou art the cause of fearlessness. So I now engage myself reciting Thy *japam*,

Thy hymns and Thy worship. I meditate on Thee, see Thy form within my heart and hear Thy praises. Be graciously pleased on me, O Devī! It is by Thy grace that Brahmā is the revealer of the four *Vedas*, Viṣṇu is the Lord of Lakṣmī, Indra is the Lord of the Devas and of the three worlds; Varuṇa is the Lord of waters, Kuvera is the Lord of wealth, Yama is the Lord of the dead, Nairṛita is the Lord of the Rākṣasas, and Soma is the Lord of the water element and praised by the three worlds. Therefore, O Auspicious World Mother! I bow down again and again to Thee."

37-45. Nārāyaṇa said: "O child! When Svayambhuva Manu, the son of Brahmā, chanted thus the hymns to the Ādyā-Śakti Bhagavatī Nārāyaṇī, She became pleased and spoke to him thus:

The Devī said: 'O King, Brahmā's son! I am pleased with your devoted worship and hymns; so ask a boon from Me that you desire.' Manu said: 'O Devī! If Thou art graciously pleased, grant that my creation be finished without any hitch.'

Devī said: 'O King of Kings! By My blessing, your work of creation will be completed without any obstruction. And by your *puñyā* (merits) they will no doubt multiply on and on. He who reads with devotion this *stotra* (hymn) composed by you will get sons, fame and beauty in the world and in the end, he will be entitled to get the highest place (liberation). The people will have powers unopposed by anybody, will get wealth and grains, will get victory everywhere and happiness; and their enemies will be ruined.'

Nārāyaṇa said: 'O child! The Devī Bhagavatī Ādyā-Śakti thus granted the desired boon to Svāyambhuva Manu and vanished away at once from his sight.'

Then the powerful Manu, obtaining thus the boon, spoke to his father: 'O Father! Now give me a solitary place where I can worship the Devī with sacrifices and do my work of creating a good number of people.'

46-48. Hearing thus the words of the son, the Prajāpati, the Lord thought over the matter for a long time: ‘How this work should be done? Alas! I have spent an endless time in this work of creation; but as yet nothing has been done. For the Earth, the receptacle of all the *jivās* is submerged in water and has gone down to the Rasātala. What is to be done now? There is only one hope and that is this: If Bhagavān, the primeval person under Whose command I am engaged in this work of creation, helps me in this work of mine, no doubt it will be accomplished then and then only.’

Here ends the First Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the description of the worlds in the MahāPurāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter II—Uplifting the Earth by the Sacrificial Boar

1-10. Nārāyaṇa said: “O child! Because you have got your senses controlled and have overcome lust, anger, etc., and other enemies, then you are certainly entitled to hear this secret. While Brahmā was discussing on this subject with Marīchi, the other Brahmaṛṣis and with Svāyambhuva Manu, suddenly there came out of the nose of the meditative Brahmā, a young boar of the dimension of one finger only. That little boar that was just in the air, soon became, while they were looking at it, enlarged to the size of a very big elephant in an instant; a very strange sight, indeed! Seeing this, the Kumāras Sanaka, etc., Marīchi and the other Seven Ṛṣis, and the creator Brahmā were struck with wonder.

Brahmā began to discuss thus: ‘Oh! This young boar has come out suddenly from My nose; though it is a very small one, it is certainly under a disguise and it has all made us merge in an ocean of wonder. Is this something Divine, of a *sāttvik* quality under the guise of this boar? It was of the size of a thumb and it is now like the Himālaya Mountain! Oh! Is this Bhagavān, the Yajña Puruṣa?’

While they were thus discussing, Bhagavān, in the shape of the boar, began to make loud sounds, like the rolling of the mountain clouds at the time of

the *pralaya* resounding all the quarters. At this Brahmā and all the Ṛṣis assembled there became very glad. Hearing the *ghura-ghura* noise of the Boar, their troubles ended and the people of Janarloka, Taparloka, Satyaloka and all the Devas being very much gladdened, began to chant sweet hymns with *chhandas* of *Ṛk, Yajus, Sāma* and *Atharva Vedas*, to that *ādi-puruṣa*, Bhagavān, from all sides.

11-20. Hearing their praises, Bhagavān Hari graciously looked on them and immediately merged Himself in the ocean. The ocean was very much agitated with the fierce striking of the hairs of the Boar when He entered into the waters, and spoke thus: 'O Deva! O Thou, the destroyer of the afflictions of your devotees! Protect me.' Hearing the words of the ocean, the God Hari tore asunder all the aquatic animals and went down beneath the waters.

Searching violently hither and thither, He knew the earth by her smell. At once Bhagavān Hari, the Lord of all, went to Her and rescued the earth by raising Her up on his big tusks—the whole Earth that is the abode of all the beings! When Bhagavān the Lord of all the sacrifices, came up with the Earth on His tusks, He looked beautiful like the elephant of a quarter taking out by the root and holding a thousand petalled lotus upon his tusks. When Bhagavān rescued thus the Earth, raising Her up on His tusks, Brahmā and Indra, the Lord of the Devas, the powerful Manu began praise to Him with sweet words:

Brahmā said: 'O Lotus-eyed! O Bhagavān! Thou art victorious everywhere; O Thou, the destroyer of the sufferings of the *bhaktas!* Thou hast humiliated the Heaven, the abode of the gods up to Satyaloka, by Thine own prowess! Thou, the giver all the desires! O Deva! This earth shines so beautiful on Thy tusks like a thousand-petalled lotus taken up by the root by a mad elephant. O Bhagavān! This Form of Thy sacrificial Boar, with earth on Thee looks so very beautiful, as the lotus looks beautiful on the tusks of an elephant.

21-22. O Lord! We bow down to Thee, the Creator and the Destroyer of everything; Thou assumest many forms for the purpose of destroying the Dānavas; Thou dost do many acts that redound to Thy glory. We bow down to Thee, to Thy front and to Thy back. Really thou hast no front nor back. Thou art everywhere. Thou art the upholder of all the celestials and the Immortals! Thine eyes shine equally everywhere.

23-25. O Deva! By Thy power I am brought up and engaged in the work of creation, and by Thy order I create this Universe in every *kalpa* and destroy it. O Lord of Immortals! In the ancient times the Devas united, churned the vast ocean by Thy help and got their due shares according to their merits. O Hari! Indra, the Lord of the Devas is enjoying the vast kingdom of Heaven, the *trilokas*, by Thy will and appointment. All the Devas worship him.

26-27. So the God of Fire has got his burning power and is residing in the bellies of the Devas, the Asuras, men and all other beings and penetrating their bellies, is satisfying all. Yama, the King of *dharma*, by Thy appointment, is the Lord of the southern quarters, presiding over the Pitṛs and being the witness of all the actions of the *jivās*, awarding duly to them the fruits thereof.

28-33. Nairṛita, the Lord of the Rakṣasas, the witness of all the actions of all the beings, by Thy commandment, is the destroyer of all the obstacles of the devotees that take refuge unto thee, though he is a Yakṣa. Varuṇa Deva, by Thy order has become duly the Lord of the waters, and the Regent of the *loka* (Dikpāla). Vāyu, the life of all, the carrier of smell, has become by Thy order *lokāpāla* and the *guru* of the universe. Kuvera, obedient to Thy order, has become the Lord of the Yakṣas and the Kinnaras, and is holding a respectful position like other *lokapālas*. Īśāna, Who is the destroyer of all the *jīvas*, has got his Lordship over a quarter by Thy order and is being praised by all the Rudras, Devas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Kinnaras, the men and all the beings. O Bhagavān! We bow down to Thee, the Lord of the Universe; the innumerable Devas that are seen are merely the small fractions of Thy powers.'

34-38. Narayana said: "O child Nārada! When Brahmā, the Creator and the Grandsire of the *lokas*, praised thus the Ādi-Puruṣa Bhagavān, He cast a sidelong glance at them, offering His grace. When Bhagavān the Sacrificial Boar, was coming up with the Earth, rescued and placed on His tusks, the awful Hiraṅyakṣa the chief of the Daityas came before Him and obstructed His passage. He killed Hiraṅyakṣa by one violent stroke of his club. He was besmeared all over his body with the blood of the Daitya; and thus He came up from the Rasātala and placed the earth on the waters. He then went away to His Vaikuṇṭha abode.

O child Nārada! He who hears or reads devotedly this glorious deed of Bhagavān and the deliverance of the Earth, will certainly be freed of all his sins and goes to the highest holiest place of Viṣṇu, the Lord of all. There is no doubt about this."

Here ends the Second Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the uplifting of the Earth by the Sacrificial Boar in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter III—Description of the family of Manu

1-23. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! When Bhagavān went away to Vaikuṇṭha, establishing the Earth in due position and equilibrium, Brahmā spoke thus to his son: 'O powerful son of mine, O Svāyambhuva! the best of those that are filled with *teja* (energy) and *tapas!* Now go on with your work of creation, as you think proper, on this earth, the upholdress of all the *jīvas*. And worship the Puruṣa, the Lord of sacrifices, according to the division of place and time, and with all the necessary materials of various kinds, high and low, and those that will be useful in performing your sacrifices. Do *dharma* according to the *śāstras*, and according to the *varṇa* (castes) and *āśrama* (*brahmācārya*, etc.); thus by gradually going on step-by-step in the path of *yoga*, your progeny will be multiplied. Beget lovely sons and daughters of good fame, culture, modesty and ornamented with various other good qualifications, like yourself; then when they will come to the

marriageable age, marry your daughters to proper persons of good qualifications. Then fix your mind thoroughly on the excellent Puruṣa Who is the very Best. O child! Now go and serve Bhagavān with devotion as I have advised you, and you will certainly attain that which is difficult to be worshipped and obtained.'

Advising thus his son Svāyambhuva Manu, and starting him in his work of creation, the Lotus-born, the Lord of all the subjects, Brahmā went away to His own abode. When Brahmā went away, having ordered his son to create progeny and subjects, Manu took that seriously in his heart and began to do that work. In due time, he had two powerful sons named Priyavrata and Uttānapāda and three lovely beautiful daughters endowed with various good qualities. Hear the names of the three daughters. The first daughter, the purifier of the world, was named Ākūti; the second was named Devahūti and the third was Prasūti. The first daughter Ākūti was married to the Mahārṣi Ruci; the second was married to the Prajapati Kardama; and the third was married to the Prajapati Dakṣa. And know that all the beings in this world had their origin from this last daughter.

Now hear the progeny of these three daughters and the Mahārṣis respectively: By Mahārṣi Ruchi was born one son named Yajña, in the womb of Ākūti; he is the part of Bhagavān Ādi Puruṣa Viṣṇu; by Mahārṣi Kardama in the womb of Devahūti was born Bhagavān Kapila Deva, the famous author of the *śānkhya-śāstra;* and in the womb of Prasūti, by Prajāpati Dakṣa were born some daughters only; know that the Devas, men, beasts and birds were all created by this Prajāpati Dakṣa. These offsprings were the first promulgators in the work of creation.

In the Svāyambhuva *manvantara*, the powerful Bhagavān Yajña, by the help of the Deva named Yāma, saved his mother's father Manu from the attacks of the Rakṣasas; and the great Lord of the *yogīs*, Bhagavān Kapila, remained for a while in his *āśrama* and gave spiritual instructions to his mother Devahūti, by which *avidyā* could be at once destroyed, and disclosed his *Sāṅkhya-śāstra*, the great work on the spiritual philosophy and the special *dhyāna-yoga* in all its details, and finally went for *samādhi* to the *āśrama* of

Pulaha where the great Deva Śaṅkarācārya lives up to today. Oh! I bow down to the great Yogāchārya, Bhagavān Kapila Deva, the fructifier of all desires, the more remembrance of Whose name easily makes the *yogī* realize the meaning of the *sāṅkhya-jñāṇa*. The sins of those that hear or read the holy anecdote of the progeny of the daughters of Manu are immediately destroyed.

O child! Now I describe to you the progeny of the sons of Svāyambhuva Manu. Hear attentively. The hearing of this will enable one to enter into the highest place. Now is being described the history about the progeny of those who formed those *dvīpas* (islands) *varṣas* (countries) and oceans for the welfare and happiness of all the creation and for the use of them. Hear."

Here ends the Third Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the description of the family of Manu in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the Mahā-Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IV—the Narration of the Family of Priyavrata

1-28. The Ṛṣi Nārāyaṇa said: "The eldest son of Svāyambhuva, Priyavrata served always his father and was very truthful. He married the daughter of the Prajāpati Viśvakarmā, the exceedingly lovely and beautiful Barhismatī, resembling himself, adorned with modesty, good nature and various other qualifications. He begat ten sons, very spiritual and well qualified and one daughter named Ūrjasvatī. This daughter was the youngest of all. The names of the ten sons are respectively: Āgnīdhra, Idhmajibha, Jajñabāhu, Mahāvīra, Rukmaśukra (Hiraṅyaretā), Ghṛtaprișṭha, Savana, Medhātithi, Vītihotra and Kavi. The name Agṇi was attached to each of the above names. Out of these ten, the three sons named Kavi, Savana and Mahāvīra were indifferent and dispassionate to the world. In due time, these became extremely free from all desires and they were proficient in *ātma-vidyā* (Self-Knowledge). They were all *ūdharetā*—of perpetual chastity; who have subdued all their passions—and took gladly to the *paramahāṁsa-dharma*. Priyavrata had by his other wife three sons named Uttama, Tāmasa and

Raivata. These were all widely known; each of them in due time became endowed with great prowess and splendor and became the Lord of one *manvatara*. Priyavrata, the son of Svāyambhuva, the King-Emperor enjoyed this earth with his sons and relations, for eleven *arvuda* years; the wonder was this, that he lived so long and there was seen no decay in his strength as regards his body or his senses. Once on an occasion, the King observed that when the sun appeared on the horizon and got up, one part of the earth was illumined and the remaining part was enveloped in darkness. Seeing this discrepancy, he thought over for a long time and exclaimed, 'What! Will the Darkness be seen in my kingdom, while I am reigning? This can never be. I will stop this by my *yogīk* powers.' Thus thinking, the King Priyavrata mounted a luminous chariot, as big as the Sun, to illumine the whole world, and circumambulated round the earth seven times. Whatever portion of the earth was trodden by the wheel on each occasion, became an ocean. Thus the seven oceans had their origins. And the portion of the earth that was included within the ruts, became the seven islands (Dvīpas).

O child! Now hear about the seven Dvīpas and the seven Oceans: The first is the Jambudvīpa; the second is Plakṣa, the third is Śalmalī; the fourth is the Kuśadvīpa; the fifth is Krauncha; the sixth is the Śakadvīpa, and the seventh is the Puṣkaradvīpa. The second Dvīpa Plakṣa is twice the width of the first, Jambudvīpa and so on; each succeeding Dvīpa is twice as large as its previous one. Now hear the names of the oceans. The first ocean is named Kṣāroda (the salt water ocean); the second is Ikṣurasa (the sugarcane ocean); the third is Surā (the wine ocean), the fourth is Ghṛtoda (the clarified butter ocean) the fifth is Ksīroda (the ocean of milk); the sixth is Dadhi Manda (the ocean of curds); and the seventh is that of the ordinary water. Jambudvīpa is surrounded by Ksīra Samudra.

King Priyavrata made his son Āgnīdhra the lord of this Dvīpa. He gave to his Idhmajibha, the Plakṣadvīpa surrounded by Iksu Sāgara; so he gave to Jajñabāhu the Śālmalīdvīpa surrounded by Surā Sāgara and he gave the lordship of Kuśadvīpa to Hiraṅyaretā. Then he gave to his powerful son Ghṛtapriṣṭha the Kraunchadvīpa surrounded by Ksīra Samudra and to his

son Medhātithi the Śākadvīpa surrounded by Dadhimanda Sāgara. Finally he gave to his son Vītihotra the Puṣkaradvīpa surrounded by the ordinary water. Thus distributing the separate divisions of the earth duly amongst his sons, he married his daughter, the youngest Ūrjasvatī to Bhagavān Uśanā. In the womb of Ūrjasvatī Bhagavān Śukrāchārya had his famous daughter Devayānī. O child! Thus giving the charge of each Dvīpa to each of his sons and marrying his daughter to the worthy hands, he took to *viveka* (discrimination) and adopted the path of *yoga*.

Here ends the Fourth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the narration of the family of Priyavrata in the Mahā Purāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter V—the Receptacle of Beings

1-31. Śrī Nārāyaṇa said: "O child Nārada! Now hear in detail about the divisions of the earth into the Dvīpas and the Varṣas as marked out by the Devas. I will describe them in brief; no one can speak about this in detail. First, the Jambudvīpa is one *lakh yojanas* in its dimensions. This Jambudvīpa is round like a lotus. There are nine *varṣas* in it and excepting the Bhadrāśva and Ketumāla, each is nine thousand Yojanas in its dimension and there are eight very lofty mountains in those *varṣas* forming their boundaries. Of the *varṣas*, the two *varṣas* that are situated in the North and South, are of the size of a bow (segmental); and the four others are elongated in their size. The center of all these *varṣas* is named Ilāvṛta-varṣa and its shape is rectangular. In the center of this Ilāvṛta is situated the golden Sumeru Mountain, the King of all the mountains, one *lakh yojanas* high. It forms the pericarp of the lotus earth. The top of this mountain is thirty *yojanas* wide. O child! Sixteen thousand *yojanas* of this mountain is under the ground and eighty-four thousand *yojanas* are visible outside. In the north of this Ilāvṛta are the three mountains the Nīlagiri, the Śvetagiri and the Śṛngavanu, forming the boundaries respectively of the three *varṣas* named Ramyaka, Hiraṅmaya and Kuru respectively. These run along from

the east and gradually extend at their base and towards the salt ocean (Lavana Samudra).

These three mountains forming the boundaries, are each two thousand *yojanas* wide. The length of each from the east towards north is less by one-tenth of the above dimensions. Many rivers take their source and flow from them. On the south of Ilāvṛta-varṣa three beautiful mountain ranges named Nisadha, Hemakūta and Himālayas, are situated extending from the east. They are each one *ayuta yojanas* high. These three mountains form the boundaries again of Kimpuruṣa and Bhārata-varṣa.

To the west of Ilāvṛta-varṣa is situated the mountain called Mālyavān and to the east are situated the mountains Gandhamādan, Nīla, and Nisadha, the centers of the highest sublime grandeur and beauty. The length and breadth of these the boundary (limiting) mountains are each two thousand *yojanas*. Then the mountains Mandara, Supārśvak, Kumuda and others are situated in the Ketumāla and Bhadrāśva-varṣas; but these all are reckoned as the *pāda-parvatas* (foothills) of the Sumeru mountain. The height and breadth of each of these is one *ayuta yojanas*. These form the pillars, as it were, of Meru on the four sides. On these mountains, the mango, jack, plantain and fig trees and various others are situated, four hundred *yojanas* wide and eleven hundred *yojanas* high; they seem to extend to the Heavens and form, as it were, the flagstaffs on the top. The roots, bases of these trees as well as their branches are wonderfully equally thick and extend to enormous distances. On those mountain tops are situated again, the four very capacious lakes. Of these, one lake is all milk; the other lake is all honey; the third lake is all sugarcane juice and the fourth lake is all sweet water. There are, then again the four very lovely gardens named Nandana, Chaitrarath, Vaibhrājaka and Sarvatobhadra, very lovely, enchanting and pleasing to the delicate female sex, where the Devas enjoy the wealth and prosperity and their other *yogīk* powers. Here the Devas live always with numerous hordes of women and have their free amorous dealings with them, to their heart's content, and they hear the sweet songs sung by the

Gandharvas and Kinnaras, the Upa-devatās about their own glorious deeds.

On the top of the Mandara mountain, there are the Heavenly mango trees eleven hundred Yojanas high; the sweet delicious nectarlike mango fruits, very soft and each of the size as the summit of a mountain, fall to the ground; and out of their juices of a color of the rising sun, a great river named Arunodā takes her origin. Here the Devas always worship the great Devī Bhagavatī named Arunā, the Destructrix of all sins, the Grantrix of all desires, and the Bestower of all fearlessness with various offerings with the lovely water of this Arunodā river, with great devotion. O child! In ancient days, the King of the Daityas worshipped always this Mahā-Māyā Arunā Devī and obtained immense wealth and prosperity. He who worships Her becomes cured of all diseases, gets his health and other happiness by Her grace. Therefore She is named Ādyā, Māyā, Atulā, Anantā, Puṣṭī, Īśvaramālinī, the Destroyer of the wicked and the giver of luster and beauty, and thus remembered on this capacious earth. The river Jāmbūnada has come out, as a result of Her worship, containing divine gold."

Here ends the Fifth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the description of the receptacle of beings and on the mountains and on the origin of rivers in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VI—Sumeru Mountain and the Rivers

1-32. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! This Arunodā river that I mentioned to you rises from the Mandara mountain and flows by the east of Ilāvarṣa. Pavana Deva (the God of wind) takes up the fragrance from the bodies of the wives of the Yakṣas, Gandharvas, etc. and the attendants of the Devī Bhavānī, and keeps the surroundings of the earth there filled with nice aroma for ten *yojanas* around. Again, rose-apples with their nuts, the size of an elephant, fall down upon the earth from the high peaks of the Mandara mountain and break into pieces; their sweet-scented juices flow down as a river. This is called the Jambū river and this flows by the south of Ilāvarṣa.

The Devī Bhagavatī there is pleased with the juice of that rose-apple (*jambū*) and is known by the name of Jambādinī. The Devas, Nāgas and Ṛṣis all always worship the lotus feet of the merciful Devī with great devotion, wishing the welfare of all the *jīvas*.

The mere remembering of the name of the Devī destroys all disease, and all the sins of the sinner. Therefore the Devas always worship and chant the names of the Devī, the remover of all obstacles. She is installed on both the banks of the Jambū river. If men recite Her names like Kokilākṣī, Karunā, Kāmapūjitā, Kathoravigrahā, Devapūjyā, Dhanyā and Gavastinī and worship, so they get their welfare both in this world and in the next. With the juice of the *jambū* fruit aided by the combination of the wind and the rays of the Sun, is created the gold. Out of this are made the ornaments for the wives of the Immortals and the Vidyādharas. This gold, created by Daiva, is known by the name of the Jāmbūnada gold. The love-stricken Devas make crowns, waistbands and armlets out of this gold for their sweethearts. There is a big Kadamba tree on the mountain Suparśva; the five streams of honey called Madhu Dhārā get out from its cavities and running by the west of Ilãvrita-varṣa, flow over the land. The Devas drink its waters and their mouths become filled with the sweet fragrance. The air carries this sweet fragrant smell to a distance of even one hundred *yojanas*. The Dhāreśvarī Mahā-Devī dwells there, the fulfiller of the desires of the *bhaktas*, highly energetic, of the nature of Kāla (Time, the Destroyer), and having large face (Mahānanā) faces everywhere, is worshipped by the Devas and is the presiding Deity of the woods and forests all around. The Devī, the Lady of the Devas, is to be worshipped by the names Karāla Dehā, Kālāṅgī and Kāmakotipravartinī.

The great Banyan tree named Śatabala is situated on the top of the Kumud mountain. From its trunk many big rivers take their origin. These rivers possess such influence as to give to the holy persons there milk, curd, honey, clarified butter, raw sugar, rice, clothing, ornaments, seats and beddings, etc.—whatever they desire. Therefore these rivers are called Kāmadugh. They come gradually down the earth and flow by the north of

Ilāvarṣa. The Bhagavatī Mīnākṣi dwell there and is worshipped by the Suras and Asuras alike. That Deity clothed blue, of fearful countenance, and ornamented with hair of blue color, always fulfils the desires of the Devas dwelling in the Heavens. Those that worship Her, remember Her or praise Her by the names Atimānyā, Atipūjyā, Mattamātaṅga Gāminī, Madanonmādinī, Mānapriyā, Mānapriyatarā, Mārabegadharā, Marapūjitā, Māramādinī, Mayūravaraśobhādhyā, Śikhivāhanagarbhabhū, etc., are honored by the Deity Mīnalochanā Ekāngarūpinī and the Parameśvara, and get all sorts of happiness. Those who drink the clear waters of these rivers become free from old age or decay, worry, perspiration, bad smell, from any disease or premature death. They do not suffer anything from error, cold, heat, or rains, or from any paleness in their color. They enjoy extreme happiness as long as they live and no dangers come to them.

O child! Now hear the names of the other twenty mountains that encircle the Golden Sumeru mountain at its base, as if they were the filaments round the pericarp of a flower. The first is Kuraṅga; they come in order Kuraga, Kuśumbha, Vikankata, Trikūta, Śiśira, Pataṅga, Ruchaka, Niṣadha, Śitīvāsa, Kapila, Śaṅkha, Vaidūrya, Chārudhi, Haṁsa, Riṣabha, Naga, Kālanjara and lastly Nārada. The central one is the twentieth."

Here ends the Sixth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the rivers and the mountains Sumeru and others in the Mahāpuranam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VII—the Ganges and the Varṣas

1-37. Nārāyaṇa said: "Jathara and Devakūta are the two mountains situated on the east of Sumeru; their dimensions towards the north are eighteen thousand *yojanas* wide and two thousand *yojanas* high. On the west of Meru, are situated the two famous lofty mountains Pavamāna and Pāriyātra; their length and height are well known. On the south of Meru are situated the two lofty mountains Kailāsa and Karavira. On the north, again, of the Sumeru mountain, are situated the mountains Śringagiri and

Makaragiri. Thus the golden Sumeru mountain shines like the Sun, surrounded by these eight mountains. In the center of Sumeru, there is a Divine city built of the creator Brahmā, ten thousand *yojanas* in dimension. The learned sages that know everything from the highest to the lowest, describe that as square in dimension and all made of gold. On the top of the Sumeru are situated the world known eight golden cities, subservient to the Brahmapurī, for the eight Lokapālas. The Lords of the four directions, east, west, north and south and of the four corners—northeast, northwest, southwest and southeast—occupy these. The dimensions of each of these eight cities are two thousand and a half *yojanas*. In fact, there are nine cities there including the Brahmapurī.

Now hear the names of these nine cities in due order. The First is Manovatī, the second is Amarāvatī, the third is Tejovatī, next come in order Samyamanī, Kṛṣṇāṅgaṇā, Śraddhāvatī, Gandhavatī and Mahodayā; the ninth is Yaśovatī. The Lords of the Purīs are Brahmā, Indra, Fire and the other Dikpālas in due order. When Viṣṇu Bhagavān assumed the Tri-Vikrama form in His Dwarf Incarnation and went to the sacrifice, to get back the kingdom of the Heavens from the demon Bali, there was created one hole or cavity over this Brahmāṇḍa Katāha (skull) by the nails of the toes of that foot that went up towards his left; and through that cavity, the famous river Bhagavatī Gaṅgā flowed on top of those heavenly Kingdoms, the clear waters of which are ever ready to destroy the sins of all the people. For this reason, She is known in the three *lokas* as the Viṣṇupadī maṇifested. This took place long long ago, many thousands of *yugas* ago, a period difficult to determine.

The Ganges fell first on the top of the Indra's Heavens, near the place called Viṣṇudhāma, known in the three worlds. Here the pure-souled Dhruva, the son of Uttānapāda, observed within his heart the lotus feet of Srī Viṣṇu Bhagavān and exists still there, taking refuge on that immoveable position. There the high-souled Seven Ṛṣis, knowing the highest purifying influence of the Ganges, circumambulate the river wishing for the welfare of all the *lokas*. This is the great place where one gets success and final liberation, the

success-giving place of the ascetics where the Munis with matted hair on their heads daily take their dip in the Ganges with the greatest pleasure and admiration.

The Ganges flows thence from the Dhruva Maṇḍala, the abode of Viṣṇu, in *kotis* and *kotis* of divine channels, interspersed with many Vimānas or aireal carriages, deluges the *candra-maṇḍala* (the Moon Sphere) and comes gradually to the Brahmaloka. Here She is divided into the four channels—Sītā, Alakanandā, Bhadrā and Chaturbhadr—and irrigating many countries, mountains and forests, ultimately falls in the oceans. The Sītā, the famous *dhārā*, purifying all while falling down from the Brahmaloka, passes round the mountains that form as it were the filaments of the flower-like Sumeru mountain, and falls on the top of the Gandhamādana range. Thence She, worshipped by the Devas, irrigates the Bhadraśvavarṣa and falls eastward into the salt ocean. The second *dhārā* (stream), named Chaksu, getting out of the Malyavān range, gradually gains strength and assumes great force and flows by Ketumālavarṣa to the western ocean. The third *dhārā*, the very pure Alakananda, getting out of the Brahmaloka, passes through the Girikūta mountain and other forests, falls to Hemakūta; next She flows through the Bhārata-varṣa and meets with the southern ocean. No words can describe the glory and the purifying effect of this river; suffice it to say that those who march out to bathe in this river get at each of their steps the fruits of doing the great sacrifices, Rājasūya, Aśvamedha, etc.

The fourth *dhārā* of the Trailokyapavanī Gaṅga Devī named Bhadrā, falling from the mountain Śriṅgavān, become swift and capacious, flows by the Northern Kuru country and satisfying the people there, flows down into the ocean. Many other rivers, getting out from the mountains Meru, Mandara and others, flow through the various Varṣas or continents, but of all the Varṣas, continents, this Bhārata-varṣa is called the *karma-kṣetra* (field of karma). The other eight Varṣas, though on earth, give the pleasures of the Heavens. The reason for this is that when the period of the persons' enjoyments in the Heavens cease, they come and take their birth in the one

or other of these eight Varṣas. The people here live for ten thousand years; their body is hard like thunderbolt and all are endowed with powers of *ayuta* elephants. No one is satisfied with a little of the pleasures of sexes; so all men live happily with their wives, etc. It is not that the males alone are so happy; the females also are full of youth throughout their lives and become pregnant when they are less than one year old. In short, the inhabitants of the Varṣas enjoy forever as the persons of Tretā-yuga do."

Hear ends the Seventh Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the story of the Ganges and the continents in Srī Mad Devī Bhāgavatam, the Mahā-Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VIII—Description of Ilāvṛta

1-11. Nārāyaṇa said: "In those Varṣas, Viṣṇu and the other Devas used to worship always the Great Devī with *japam* and meditation, and chant hymns to Her. The forests there are ornamented with all sorts of fruits, flowers and leaves, in all the seasons. In those excellent forests, and on the mountains in those *varṣas* on the clear waters interspersed with full-blown lotuses and *śārasas* (cranes) and in those countries where varieties of mountain trees are standing and where varieties of birds frequent and echo all around, the people play in the waters and engage themselves with a great many pleasant occupations; and the beautiful women as well, roam there with the knitting of their eyebrows. The people there enjoy as they like, surrounded by young women; Nārāyaṇa, the *ādipuruṣa* Bhagavān Himself, worships the Devī there to show His extreme grace to all the inhabitants of the Navavarṣa. The people also worship the Deity. By worshipping the Devī only, Bhagavān remains there in *samādhi*, surrounded by Aniruddha and his other *vyūha-catustaya* (four forms). But in Ilāvṛta-varṣa, Bhagavān Rudra, originated from the eyebrows of Brahmā, resides only with women. No other person can enter there; for the Bhāvanī, the Śakti of Rudra has cursed that any male entering there would be transformed into a female. The Lord of Bhavānī, surrounded by innumerable women, remains here engaged in the worship of the

unmaṇifested unborn Bhagavān Saṅkarṣaṇa. For the good of humaṇity, with intense meditation, He worships His own *turīya* form of the nature of Tamas, thus:

12-19. Śrī Bhagavān said: "Obeisance to Thee! Bhagavān, the Great Puruṣa, endowed with all the qualities (the principal six Aiśvaryas or prosperities), the Ananta (the Infinite) and the Unmaṇifested! We worship Thee, Whose lotus feet are the refuge of all. Thou art the great storehouse of all the superhuman powers and the divine faculties of omnipotence, etc. Thou art always present to the *bhaktas*. Thou art creating all these beings. Thou givest *mokṣa* to the *bhaktas* and destroyest their attachment to the world, and Thou bindest the non-devotees in bondage to this world. Thou art the Lord. We worship Thee. We are entirely under the control of the passions of anger, etc., and our minds are always attached to the senses; but though Thou art always looking at this world for its creation, etc. Thy mind is not a bit attached to it. So who will not turn to Thee, desirous to conquer his self?

Thou art appearing by Thy Māyā as one whose sight is ignorant; Thou lookest dreadful with Thy eyes reddened with the drink of *madhu* (wine). By the touch of Thy feet, the mental faculties are very much enchanted; hence the women folk of the Nāgas cannot in any way worship Thee, out of bashfulness. The Ṛṣis say that though Thou art the only one to create, preserve and destroy, yet Thou art quite unconcerned with them. Thou art infinite and Thou hast innumerable heads. This vast universe is like the mustard seed resting somewhere on one of these heads, which Thou canst not feel even. The *mahāt-tattva* is Thy body maṇifested first. It is built of *sattva*, *rāja* and *tamo-guṇas*. Brahmā has come out of this, and I again have sprung from this Brahmā, and am nurtured by the *sattva* and other *guṇas;* and with the help of *teja*, created these elements and the senses. These *mahāt-tattvas* and we all are controlled by Thy extraordinary form. Thou hast kept us in our respective places by Thy *kriyā-śakti* as birds are kept duly by the strings through them. *Mahāt-tattva*, *ahaṅkāra* and the Devas, the elements and the senses all united create this universe by Thy Grace. Thy creation is very big and grand; for this reason the gross thinkers, deluded

by Thy power, never understand it. This Māyā is the only means to get the *saṁsāra-nivṛtti: mokṣa*, the real goal of man. But this Māyā again involves them in the *karmik* entanglements, very hard to get through. Coming in and going out, both of these are Thy forms; so we bow down to Thee."

20-23. Nārāyaṇa said: "Thus Bhagavān Rudra, with His own persons in Ilāvṛta Varṣa used to worship the Devī and the Saṅkarṣaṇa, the controller of all the *lokas*. The son of Dharma, well known by the name of Bhadraśrava and all the persons born of his family and his attendants, worship thus the Devī. This form is well known to all by the name of Hayagrīva and worshipped thus. All the persons there worship Him with the intense meditation and *samādhi,* and realize Him thoroughly. Then they praise Him, according to due customs and get the thorough *siddhis,* success in getting extraordinary powers."

24-29. The Bhadraśravās said: "Obeisance to Thee, Bhagavān, the incarnation of virtue, and to Him who destroys completely the desires, attachments, etc. to worldly objects! Ho! How wonderful are the feats of Bhagavān! Death always destroys all, but people even seeing this, seem not to see it. Seeing that the son meets with death, the father desires to live long —not for a virtuous purpose but for sense enjoyments, what is called *vikarma*. Those who are skilled in *jñāṇa* and *vijñāṇa* say that this universe that is seen is very transient. Moreover those Paṇḍitas who are endowed with much *jñāṇa*, see vividly the transitoriness of this universe. Still, O Unborn One! When practically they come to deal with this, they all become overpowered with the influence of Māyā. So Thy pastime (*līlā*) is wonderfully variegated. Instead of spending our time uselessly in discussing on *śāstras* we bow down to Thee, and Thee alone. Thou art the Self-maṇifest *caitanya* (universal consciousness). Thou art not covered by Māyā. Thou dost not do anything in the sort of creation, etc. Thou remainest simply as the Witness thereof. Sill the *Vedas* declare that Thou createst, preservest and destroyest the Universe. It is quite reasonable and nothing to be wondered at.

Thou art the *ātman* of all. When the *pralaya,* the time of great dissolution comes, the *Vedas* were stolen by the Daityas and taken to the nether regions, the Rasātala. Thou, in the form of Hayagrīva rescued the *Vedas* and gave them to the Grandsire Brahmā, who was very eager to get them back and understand their meanings. Thou art the true *sankalapa* (resolve); we bow down to Thee."

Thus the Bhadraśravās praise the Haiyagrīva form of Hari and sing the glorious deeds of Him. He who reads these narratives of the Mahāpuruṣa, the high-souled personage or he who makes others hear these things, both of them, quitting their sinful bodies, go to the Deviloka."

Here ends the Eighth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the description of Ilāvṛta in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IX—the Division of the Continents

1-2. Nārāyaṇa said: "In Harivarṣa, Bhagavān Hari is shining splendid as a *yogī* in the form of Narasiṁha. The Mahābhāgavat (most devoted) Prahlāda, who knows the attributes of God, worships and chants hymns with his whole-hearted devotion, seeing that beautiful form, gladdening to all the people.

3-11. Prahlāda prayed: 'I bow down to Thee, Bhagavān Nṛsiṁha Deva. Thou art the Light of all Lights. Thy big teeth are like thunderbolts. Let Thee maṇifest in Thy most terrible form. Let Thee destroy the desires of the people to do *karma* and let Thee devour the great *avidyā* (ignorance) the *moha* (delusion) of the people. Thou art the receptacle of the *sattva, rāja* and *tamo-guṇas*. Let myself be always free from any fear by Thy Grace. *Āūm̐ khrauṁ!* Let this whole world rest completely in peace and happiness. Let the cheats quit their guiles and be pure and simple. Let all the people quit completely their animosities towards each other and think of their welfare. Let all the people be free from making injuries to others and be peaceful; and let them have their control over their passions. Let our minds be

completely free from desires and rest entirely and devotedly at Thy lotus feet. Let us not be attached to sons, wives, wealth, house or to any other worldly objects. If there be any attachment, let it be to the objects dear to Bhagavān. For he who barely sustains his body and soul together and controls himself completely, success is very near to him; not so to the persons that are attached to the senses. The dirt of the mind that is not washed away by bathing in the Ganges or by taking recourse to the *tīrthas*, etc., is removed by the company of the devotees and by their influence: hearing, thinking and meditating on the attributes of Bhagavān.

So who is there that does not serve Bhagavān? He who has got *niṣkāma-bhakti,* devotion without regard to any fruits thereof, to Bhagavān, to him come always the Devatā, *dharma, jñāṇa* and other higher qualities. But he who indulges in various mental phantasms, without any *bhakti* to Bhagavān, follows the worldly happiness that is certainly to be hated, and he never gets *vairāgya* and other higher qualities. As water is life to the fish, so Bhagavān Hari is the self of all embodied beings; and so He is to be specially prayed to.

So if a high-souled person be attached to household happiness without thinking of God, then his greatness dwindles into a trifling insignificance, like the ordinary pleasures of man and woman when they are full of youth. So leave, at once, the home that is the source of birth and death and leave *tṛṣṇā* (thirst, desire), clinging to life, low-spiritedness, name and fame, egotism, shame, fear, poverty and loss of one's honor, worship the Lotus Feet of Bhagavān Nṛsiṁha Deva and be entirely fearless.'

Thus Prahlāda, the Lord of the Daityas, daily worships devotedly Bhagavān Nṛsiṁha, resplendent in his lotus heart, the death blow, the lion to all the elephant sins. In the Ketumāla-varṣa, Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa is reigning in the form of Kāmadeva, the God of Love. The people there always worship Him. The daughter of Ocean, Indirā Devī, who confers honor and glory to the Mahātmas, is the presiding Deity of the Varṣa. She always worships Kāmadeva with the following verses:

12-18. Lakṣmī Devī prayed: '*Āūm̐, hṛām, hṛīm, hṛūm, āūm namo bhagavate hṛṣikesāya!* Thou art Bhagavān of the nature of *āūm*. Thou are the director, the Lord of the senses. Thy *ātman* is the highest and the receptacle of all the good things. All the *karma-vṛttis*, all the *jñāṇa-vṛttis*, effort, resolution and other faculties of the mind, act in their respective channels by Thy glance, and by their being constantly practiced in Thee. And the elements over which they get their mastery are subservient to Thy laws. The mind and the other eleven *indriyas*, touch, taste and the other five senses are but Thy parts. All the rites and ceremonies observed in the *Vedas* are found in Thee. Thou art the infinite store of all the nutriments of the *jīvas*. From Thee flows *paramānanda*, the Highest Bliss. Thou art All, Thou art the substance, purity incarnate; Thou art the energy, the strength maṇifest in all. Thou art the completion of all happiness, and Thou art the only one substance that can be desired by the people.

So, obeisance to Thee! Thy Lordship is not dependent on any other person. The women that know Thee, the Lord of all, and yet worship other bodies for their husbands—those husbands can never save them, their lives, their wealth, progeny or other dear things, as those are controlled by *kāla* (Time) and *karma*. So they cannot be termed husbands at all; Thou art the real husband, and no other. For Thou art naturally fearless and Thou protectest in every way the persons that become afraid. Thou art the Lord of all wealth; so no other is superior to Thee. How then, can they be independent whose happiness depends on others! The lady that desires to worship Thy lotus feet only and becomes subservient to no others, attains all the desires. Again the lady who, desiring other desires than to get Thee, does not worship Thy lotus feet, Thou fulfillest the desires of her too. But, O Bhagavān! When the period of enjoyment of these things ceases and when the objects of these enjoyments are destroyed, then she repents much due to the loss of those things. Brahmā, Mahādeva, the Suras and the Asuras practice hard *tapasyā* to get Me, impelled by their desires to attain the objects of sense enjoyments; but he only really gets Me who worships and takes refuge of Thy lotus feet alone, for My heart is entirely attached to Thee.

So, O Acyuta! Kindly show Thy Grace and put Thy universally praised lotus palm that Thou placest on Thy *bhaktas*, on my head. O Bhagavān! That Thou takest me in Thy bosom is a sign of Thy Grace. No one can fathom the deeds of Thee, the only controller of all.'

Thus the Prajāpati and the Lords of that *varṣa* worship Bhagavān, the Friend of all, with a view to attain their respective desires and *siddhis*. In Ramyak-varṣa, the Matsya form of Bhagavān is set up and consecrated. The Suras and the Asuras worship Him. The highly intelligent Manu always chant hymns to that excellent form thus:

'Obeisance to Him who is the life of all, the essence and strength of all, to that great fish form, the body incarnate of *sattva-guṇa*, who is of the nature of Āūṁ and Bliss.

19-23. Thou art the Lord of all the *lokapālas* and of the form of the *Vedas*. Thou art within and without all this universe, moving and non-moving; still all the beings are unable to see Thy form. As the people bring under their control wooden dolls, so Thou controllest the universe by the rules and prohibitions under the names of the Brāhmaṇas, etc. Thou art God. The *lokapālas*, being overcome by the fever of jealousy and pride, become quite unable, either individually or collectively, to quit their jealousies and to protect the tripeds, quadrupeds, reptiles and snakes; so Thou art God. Thou hadst upheld this earth along with me and with the medicinal plants and creepers; and Thou showedest the highest luminous light in the great ocean at the time of *pralaya*, tossed with surging waves, and didst roam there. Thou art the Self of all the beings in the universe. So we bow down to Thee.'

Thus the Manu, the best of the mortal beings, used to praise Bhagavān, who took His incarnation in the shape of a fish, the remover of all doubts. Manu, the foremost of the Bhāgavata devotees, is reigning there in the service of the fish incarnation of Bhagavān, with intense meditation, expurging all sins with great devotion."

Here ends the Ninth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the narration of the division of the continents in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter X—Description of Bhuvanakoṣa

1-7. Nārāyaṇa said: "In Hiraṅmaya-varṣa, Bhagavān is remaining in the form of Kūrma, the tortoise, as the Lord of *yoga*. He is thus praised and worshipped by Aryamā, the ruler of the *pitṛs*.

Aryamā said: '*Āūṁ namo bhagavate akūpārāya:* King of tortoises, sustaining the world, obeisance to Thee, the Lord of all prosperity in the form of a tortoise (*kūrma*); Thou art built of *sattva-guṇa* incarnate; no one can make out where Thou dost dwell; Thou art not encompassed by time; Thou art in the present, past and future; so obeisance to Thee. Thou dost pervade all things; we bow down to Thee. All are established in Thee; so obeisance to Thee. By Thy extraordinary *māyā* (power) Thou hast made maṇifest this universe that is seen. This is Thy Form. It is by no means distinct from Thee. This Thy Form is seen in so many forms. So the true reality being unknown like a mirage, these cannot be counted really speaking; what is Thy form, no one can definitely say. The beings generated by heat and moisture like the insects and worms, those that are born of eggs, from wombs and the plants and other moving and non-moving beings, the Devas, Ṛṣis, Pitṛs, Bhūtas, and these senses; the sky, the heavens, earth, mountains, rivers, oceans, islands, planets and stars—all these art Thou and Thou alone. Thy name, form, and appearance are as varied, and their numbers cannot be counted. Still, Kapila and others have determined their numbers, by the knowledge of which Thou canst become visible to the eye of knowledge. Thy form and nature are determined by these *sāṅkhyas* ascertained by Kapila. So we bow down to Thee.'

Thus Aryamā, and the other rulers of the *varṣa* all united sing, praise and worship Bhagavān Kūrma Deva, the controller of all and the generator of all. 'All Hail to Thee! Bhagavān Yajña Puruṣa is maṇifest in Uttara Kuru-

maṇḍala in the form of Ādi-Varāha. The Earth Herself worships Him always. The Goddess Earth praises Hari, the Yajña-Varāha, the destroyer of the Daityas and worships duly that Deva, with Her heart lotus, naturally devoted, rendered more devoted by Her attachment to the Lord.'

8-13. The Goddess Earth spoke: *"Āūm̐ namo bhagavate mantratattva liṅgāya yajña kratave:* I bow down to Bhagavān, the great boar; Thou art *Āūm̐;* Thy real form and nature can be known by only the *mantra* and *tattva*. Thou art *yajña* and *kratu* (sacrifice) incarnate; therefore all the great sacrifices are Thy limbs. Thou art the three *yugas,* there being no *yajña* in the Satya-yuga; Thou art that which is left as pure after doing *karma* so as to be fit for performing *yajñas*. So obeisance to Thee. The sages, versed in *jñāṇa* and *vijñāṇa* say that Thou art hidden in the body and in the senses as fire is hidden in the wood. So they, ardent to see Thee, seek for Thee with a discriminative and dispassionate mind, judging *karmas* and their fruits; and then Thy Nature is revealed.

I bow down to Thee; Thy Form can be ascertained by the cause and effect of the *karmas* and other *guṇas* of *māyā*, sense objects, senses, actions, Devas, body, time, *ahaṅkāra* and others. I bow down to Thee! Those can see Thy form, whose mind is firmly established in Thee, by their discrimination and *yama, niyama* etc., and who have abandoned all sorts of fickleness and changeability of their tempers. So, obeisance to Thee. As iron goes attracted towards the magnet, so Māyā dances before Thee with Her *guṇas* and Her works in the way of the creation, preservation and destruction of this universe; but Thou art totally indifferent to it. For the sake of the *jīvas* (embodied souls), desire comes to Thee, though Thou art not quite willing! Thou art the witness of the *jīvas* and their *adṛṣṭa* (fate). I bow down to Thee. The Yajña-Varāha, the cause of this universe, has lifted me up from the Rasātala and placing me on His big tusks, has come out from the *pralaya*, the great ocean, after overpowering in battle His enemy, the powerful Daitya, like an elephant. I bow down to that controller of all, to Thee.'

In the Kimpuruṣa-varṣa, Bhagavān Ādi-Puruṣa (the Original Person), the Self-maṇifest and the Lord of all, is residing in the form of Rāma, the son of Daśaratha and the Joy of the heart of Sītā Devī.

14-18. Śrī Hanumāna thus spoke: '*Āūṁ namo bhagavate uttama-ślokaya:* I bow down to Bhagavān, who art sung by the excellent verses, purifying all. I bow down to Thee, the incarnate of modesty, good temper, vow and good signs; Thy mind is always under control; Thou dost imitate, as Thy nature is good, the actions of all persons; obeisance to Thee. Thou art the Supreme object to award praise. Obeisance to Thee. Thou art Brahmaṇya-deva in the creation of the universe, the high-souled Person Mahāpuruṣa. Thou gettest the first share, above all persons! Thou art the one *tattva* and That alone, as established in the *Vedānta*. The holy Self-realization is the only guide to it. This *tattva* dominates over all the *guṇas*. It can never be an object. It can be realized only by pure intellect. There is no name, no form of It. It is always beyond the pale of *ahaṅkāra*. I take refuge to this *tattva*, the most peaceful, with my body and mind.

Thy incarnation in human shape in this world is not simply for killing Rāvana but for giving instructions to the mortals. The contact with woman and the suffering thereof are very difficult to avoid; to give this lesson also He took this incarnation, He Who is merged in enjoying the supreme bliss of His own nature and is the Lord of all, how can He suffer miseries in the bereavement of Sītā? He is the best friend and the very *ātman* of those who have conquered their minds and senses. Especially He is the receptacle of all qualities and is in enjoyment of other divine extraordinary powers. So He is not attached to the worldly objects. How can the delusion due to His wife come and darken Him? and why will He send Lakṣmana in exile? He is the *mahāt-tattva* and the *parama-puruṣa;* so good birth, beauty, intelligence, oratory or good form, nothing can please Him. *Bhakti* (devotion) alone can attract Him. If that be not the case, then why will He, the elder of Lakṣmana, Bhagavān the son of Daśaratha make friendship with us, the wanderers of the forest and who are by nature not the receptacles of any beauty, etc.?

So everyone, be he a Sura or Asura, human or not, should worship Hari maṇifest in Rāma, in the human body, with all his heart. He is so good that if anybody worships Him even to a very small extent, He always considers it to be much; what more can be said than this that He took all the inhabitants of Kośala to Heaven?'

19-20. Nārāyaṇa said: "Thus Hanumān, the best of monkeys, sings the praises and worships duly in Kimpuruṣa-varṣa, the lotus-eyed Rāma, truthful and determined in his vows. He who hears this wonderful description of Rāma is freed of all his sins and goes with his body pure to the abode of Rāma."

Here ends the Tenth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the description of Bhuvanakoṣa in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XI—Description of Bhāratavarṣa

1. Nārāyaṇa said: "In this Bhāratavarṣa (India) I am present, as the First of all, in the shape of the Man, at present existing before you. Let you praise Me incessantly thus:"

2-28. Nārada said: "Thou art Bhagavān. Obeisance to Thee. Thou art completely free from attachment and envy, and Thou art the incarnation of *dharma, jñāṇa* and *vairāgyam* (dispassion). No trace of *ahaṅkāra* (false egotism) is in Thee. Obeisance to Thee. Thou hast nothing of wealth; Thou art the foremost of the family of Ṛṣis; Thou art Nara-Nārāyaṇa; Thou art the *paramahaṅsa* (the highest class of ascetics and renouncers of the world). Thou art the Highest *guru;* Thou art happy with Thyself and the Leader of all; I bow down to Thee. Thou art the Lord of all, yet not mixed in the work of creation, etc. Though Thou residest in every embodied being, yet no hunger and thirst can press Thee; though Thou art the Witness, yet Thy sight is not at all disturbed by the proximity. Thou art not at all connected and no desires can come to Thee; Thou art the Witness. So I bow down to Thee. This path of *yoga* has come out of Thee and is established in Thee.

Bhagavān Hiraṇyagarbha has given instructions on the cleverness of *yoga*, thus: 'That leaving aside the egotism of this body, the seat of all evils, the people at last will take resort to the path of *bhakti* and set their minds on Thee, Who art beyond the pale of the three *guṇas*.' If, like the ignorant persons very much attached to this world as well as the next, the wise pass their time in the thoughts of their sons, wives and riches, and ultimately become very much pained on the destruction of this ugly body; if persons versed in *jñāṇa* and *vijñāṇa* be afraid in the end of their separation from the body, then their study of the *śāstras* and all their labors become labors merely, without any effect. When such a thing occurs to the learned, then O Thou, Subduer of the knowledge of senses! Thou Thyself givest us instructions that we may easily think of Thee. Then this terrible clinging to this ugly body that Thy Māyā brings about and which it is very difficult to discard by other means, will leave us quickly. Nārada, the seer of all, well-qualified with the knowledge of all the *tattvas*, the foremost of the Munis, thus worships it and praises Nārāyaṇa, Who is unaffected by *ūpādhis* and who is *nitya* and *līlā* (both permanent and pastime-making)."

"O Devarṣi! I now describe to you the rivers and mountains in Bhāratvarṣa. Hear attentively. Malaya, Maṅgalaprastha, Maināka, Citrakūta, Ṛṣabha, Kūtaka, Kolla, Sahya, Devagiri, Ṛṣyamūka, Śriśaila, Vyankata, Mahendra, Vāridhāra, Vindhya, Śuktimān, Ṛkṣa, Pāriyātra, Droṇa, Citrakūta, Gobardhana, Raivataka, Kakubha, Nīla, Gaurmukha, Indrakīla, Kāmagiri and countless other mountains. Great merits accrue on seeing these mountains. Hundreds and thousands of rivers issue from these mountains. Drinking their waters, bathing in them, visiting them and singing their praises completely destroy the sins of mind, word and body. The names of the rivers are: Tāmraparnī, Chandravaśā, Kritamālā, Vatodakā, Vaihāyasī, Kāverī, Venā, Payasvini, Tungabhadrā, Kṛṣṇavenā, Śarkarā, Vartakā, Godāvarī, Bhīmarathī, Nirbindhyā, Payosnikā, Tāpī, Revā, Surasā, Narmadā, Sarasvatī, Charmanvatī, and the Indus, Andha, and Sone, Ṛṣikulyā, Trisāmā, VedaSmṛti, Mahānadī, Kauśikī, Yamuṇā, Mandākini, Drisadvatī, Gomatī, Sarayū, Oghavatī, Saptavatī, Susamā, Śatadru, Chandrabhāgā, Marudbridhā, Vitastā, Asiknī, Viśvā and many other rivers.

Those persons that take their births in this Varṣa enjoy the *divya* (divine), human and lower enjoyments as the effects of their *karma*, in accordance with their *sāttvik, rājasik* and *tāmasik* qualities. All the inhabitants of this Varṣa take their Sannyāsa, Vānaprastha, etc., in accordance with the rules of their respective *varṇas* (castes) and enjoy beatitudes as dictated in their *śāstras*. The Vedavādis (the propounders of the *Vedas*), the Ṛṣis and the Devas declare that this Varṣa is superior to all the other Varṣas, as the Grace of God is easily obtained here. They say: 'Oh! What an amount of good works the inhabitants of Bhāratavarṣa did in their previous lives, that by their influence, Bhagavān Hari has become pleased with them without their having any *sādhana* (good *yogik* practices). Therefore we also desire to have our births there, for there if we be born amidst the persons there, we would be able serve Hari, Mukuṇḍa in every way. What will severe austerities, gifts, sacrifices, and practicing vows avail us? Even if we go to Heaven, what benefit we will derive there? Then we would never be able to bring our mind to the lotus feet of Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa. Our taste for sense enjoyment would increase and we would be wholly deprived of Bhagavān. Far better it is to be born in this Bhāratavarṣa as short- lived persons, than to acquire other places where one can live up to the period of *kalpa* and then be reborn. For the intelligent people of Bhārata getting this mortal coil can, within a short period, devote themselves to Bhagavān Hari and be free from rebirth. That place is never to be visited and served, even if that be Svarga-loka, where the nectar-like ocean of the sayings of Vaikuṇṭha are not heard; where there are no assemblages of saints who take refuge of the lotus feet of Bhagavān; where the great sacrifices and festivities of Bhagavān Viṣṇu are not celebrated. Those persons that do not try for *mokṣa* when they get human births and when they possess *jñāṇa, kriyā* (methods of doing sacrifices and other works for achievement of *jñāṇa*) and *dravya* (materials for those sacrifices), are certainly like beasts and get themselves repeatedly entanged into bondage. The people of Bhāratavarṣa offer oblations to Indra and other deities, invoking their names separately, with proper *vidhis* (rules), *mantras*, and *purodāsas* (a sacrificial oblation made of ground rice and offered in *kapālas* or vessels); but the all-sufficient Bhagavān Hari, the giver of blessings accepts those very gladly.

True, He grants unto the people what they ask from Him; but He hardly gives anybody the Paramārtha, the Highest Goal. The reason being that the people ask again and again after receiving what they had asked. So He gives of Himself His own lotus feet to those who, having abandoned all their desires, worship Him and Him only with the idea of love. Thus we are living very happily in the Heavens as the fruit of the *iṣṭāpūrta* that we performed fully; yet we want that we may also be born in Bhāratavarṣa, with our memory all renewed with the thought of Bhagavān Hari. Bhagavān residing in this Bhāratvarṣa, awards the highest welfare to its inhabitants'."

29-32. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Devaṛṣi! Thus the Devas of the Heavens, the Siddhas, the Highest Ṛṣis, sing the excellent merits of this Bhāratavarṣa. There are the eight Upadvīpas of this Jambudvīpa: When the sons of King Sagara were searching for the footprints of the stolen horse for the Aśvamedha sacrifice, they found these Upadvīpas; so it is definitely stated. The names of these are Upadvīpas: Suvarṇaprastha, Chandraśukra, Āvartana, Ramānaka, Mandaropākhya, Harina, Pānchajanya, and Ceylon. The length and breadth of Jambudvīpa have been described; now the other six Dvīpas, Plakṣa and others will be described. Hear.

Here ends the Eleventh Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the description of the continents and of Bhāratavarṣa in the MahāPurāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XII—Plakṣa, Śālmala and Kuśa Dvīpas

1-37. Nārāyaṇa said: "Jambudvīpa has been described, how it is and what is its width. It is surrounded on all sides by the salt ocean. As Meru is surrounded by Jambudvīpa, so the salt ocean is surrounded by Plakṣadvīpa, twice its size. As the ditch is surrounded by gardens, so the salt ocean is surrounded by gardens. As the Jambu tree exists in Jambudvīpa, so the Plakṣa tree exists in the Plakṣadvīpa and of the same size. The name Plakṣadvīpa is derived from the name of this Plakṣa tree.

This tree is of a golden color. Fire exists at its bottom with form incarnate. This is named Saptajihva. The Ruler of this island is Idhmajihva, the son of Priyavrata. He divided his island into the seven Varṣas and distributed them to each of his seven sons. He himself took refuge of the path of *yoga*, so much liked by the Knowers of Self, and he got the realization of Bhagavān Vāsudeva. The names of those seven Dvīpas are: Śiva, Yavas, Subhadra, Sānti, Ksema, Amṛta, and Abhaya. Seven rivers and seven mountains exist respectively in the seven islands. The rivers are: Arunā, Nṛmnā, Angirasī, Sāvitrī, Suprabhātikā, Ṛtambharā, and Satyambharā. The names of the mountains are Maṇikūta, Vajrakūta, Indrasena, Jyotismāna, Suparna, Hiraṅyasthīva, and Meghamāla. Seeing and drinking the waters of these rivers take away all sins and all darkness due to ignorance. The four castes Hamsa, Pataṅga, Ūrdhāyana, and Satyānga live here, corresponding to the four castes Brāhmaṇa, etc. The inhabitants of this Plakṣadvīpa live for one thousand years, and all are of variegated wonderful appearance. They follow the customs and usages dictated by the *Vedas* and worship the Sun-god for the attainment of Heaven. The *mantra* by which the worship is done is this: 'We take refuge of that Sun, Who is the maṇifest body of the Ancient Person Viṣṇu, and Who is the ordainer of *satya* (truth), *ṛtā* (straightforwardness), Brahmā, *amṛta* (immortality) and *mṛtyu* (death)'; O Nārada! All the persons here live long, of vigorous senses, energetic, powerful, intelligent, enthusiastic and valorous; everyone gets extraordinary powers.

Next to this Plakṣadvīpa is the Ikṣu (sugarcane juice) Ocean. This Ikṣu-sāgara surrounds Plakṣadvīpa. Next comes Śalmala-dvīpa. It is twice as large as Plakṣa. This Dvīpa is surrounded by Surāsāgara (the ocean of wine). There is a tree named Śalmalī in this island, which is as large as the Plakṣa tree. The high-souled Garuḍa resides on that tree. Yajñavāhu is the ruler of this place. He was born of Priyavrata; he divided his Varṣa into seven parts and distributed each of them to his seven sons respectively. Now hear the names of these Varṣas: Surochana, Saumanasya, Ramana, Deva Varṣa, Pāribhadra, Āpyāyana and Vijñāta. Seven mountains and seven rivers exist there respectively. The names of the mountains are:

Sarasa, Śataśringa, Vāma Deva, Kandaka, Kumuda, Puspavarṣa, and Sahasra-śruti. Now hear the names of the rivers. Anumati, Sinībālī, Sarasvatī, Kūhu, Rajanī, Nandā and Rākā; these are the seven rivers. The people are divided into the four castes: Śrutadhara, Vīryadhara, Vasundhara, Isundhara. These correspond to the Brāhmaṇas, etc. They worship Bhagavān Moon, the controller of all and the Creator of all the *Vedas*. They offer food duly in the black and white fortnight to their Pitṛs. The *mantra* for their worship is: 'Let Soma, the King of all, be pleased.'

O Nārada! Next to Surāsāgara is Kuśadvīpa, surrounded by Ghritasāgara (the ocean of clarified butter). Its dimensions are twice as large. Here are blades of Kuśa grass, of a very resplendent color. The name of the Dvīpa is from this Kuśastamba. This bundle of Kuśa illumines all the quarters with their gentle rays. The ruler of the Dvīpa is Hiraṅyaretā, the son of Priyavrata. He divided the Dvīpa into seven parts and distributed each of them to each of his seven sons respectively. The names of the seven sons are: Vasu, Vasudāna, Dhridharuchi, Nābhigupta, Stutyavrata, Vivikta, and Bhāmadevaka. There are seven mountains forming the seven boundaries and so are the seven rivers. Hear the names of these. The names of the mountains are: Chakra, Chatuhśringa, Kapila, Citre Devānīka, Kūta, Ūrdharomā and Dravina. The names of the rivers are: Rasakulyā, Madhukulyā, Mitravindā, Śrutavindā, Devagarbhā, Ghritāchyut, and Mantramalikā. The inhabitants of the Kuśadvīpa drink the waters of these rivers. There are the four castes here Kuśala, Kovida, Abhiyukta, and Kulaka corresponding to the Brāhmaṇas, etc. They are all powerful like Indra and the other chief Devas; and all of them are omniscient. They worship the Fire God and perform various good works in honor of Him. Their mantra is this: 'O Fire! Thou carriest the oblations direct to Para-Brahman. In the sacrifices of the Devas, Thou worshippest that Personal God and offerest to Him whatever are given in oblations, mentioning the respective limbs of His Body.' Thus the inhabitants of that Dvīpa worship the Fire God."

Here ends the Twelfth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the narration of Plakṣa, Śālmala, and Kuśa Dvīpas in the MahāPurāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIII—Description of the Remaining Dvīpas

1. Nārada said: "Thou, the Knower of everything! Describe about the remaining Dvīpas, knowing which we will be highly delighted."

2-36. Nārāyaṇa spoke thus: "The very vast Ghrita-sāgara (ocean of clarified butter) encircles Kuśa Dvīpa. Next to it is the Krauncha Dvīpa. It is twice as large as Kuśa. The Ksīra Sāgara (ocean of milk) surrounds this Dvīpa. The Krauncha mountain is standing here. The name of this Dvīpa is derived from this mountain. In days gone by, the highly intelligent Kārtikeya burst this mountain by his own prowess. This Dvīpa is washed by the Ksīra Sāgara; and Varuṇa is its Regent. The son of Priyavrata, Ghritapristha, respected by all and whose prosperity knows no end, is the Lord of this Dvīpa. He divided this Dvīpa into seven parts and distributed them to his sons, naming the Varṣas after the names of his sons. He made his sons the rulers of those places, and he himself took the refuge of Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa. The names of the seven Varṣas are respectively: Āma, Madhuruha, Meghapristha, Sudhāmaka, Bhrājistha, Lohitārna and Vanaspati. O Nārada! The seven mountains and the rivers there are very celebrated throughout the worlds. The names of the mountains are: Śūkla, Vardhamāna, Bhojana, Upavarhana, Nanda, Nandana, and Sarvatobhadra. The names of the rivers are: Abhayā, Amritaughā, Āryakā, Tīrthavatī, Vrittirūpavatī, śuklā, and Pavitravatikā. The inhabitants there drink the highly pure water of these rivers. The people there are divided into four colors Puruṣa, Risabha, Dravina and Vedaka and they worship Bhagavān Varuṇa, of the form of water. Then they become very discriminative, and with great devotion, holding full within their folded palms the water, repeat the following mantra: 'O Water! Thou art the essence Vīrya of the Person Bhagavāna and Thou sanctifiest the Bhūrloka, Bhuvarloka, and

Svarloka. Thou destroyest the sins of all. We all are touching it; purify our bodies.' After finishing their *mantrams*, they sing various hymns to Varuṇa.

Next to the Kṣīroda Sāgara, is the Śaka Dvīpa, thirty-two *lakh yojanas* wide, surrounded by the Dadhi Sāgara (ocean of curds), of similar dimensions. Here the most excellent tree named the *śaka* tree exists. O Nārada! The Dvīpa is named so after the tree. Medhātithi, the son of Priyavrata is the Lord of this Dvīpa. He divided this land into seven Varṣas and distributed each to his seven sons respectively; and ultimately he took refuge to the path of *yoga*. The names of the seven Varṣas are Purojava, Manojava, Pavamānaka, Dhūmrānīka, Citrarepha, Bahurūpa, and Viśvadhrik. In these Varṣas there are seven mountains, one in each Varṣa, forming their boundaries; and there are seven rivers also. The names of the mountains are: Īśana, Ūruśringa, Valabhadra, Śata Keśara, Sahasra-srotaka, Devapāla, and Mahāsana; the names of the rivers are: Anaghā, Āyurdā, Ubhayaspristi, Aparājitā, Pañchapadī, Sahasraśruti and Nijadhriti. These seven rivers are all very big and resplendent with luster. The people are divided into four classes: Varṣas, Satyavrata, Kratuvrata, Dānavrata, and Anuvrata. They all take the *prāṇayāma* exercise and thereby bring the *rājas* and *tamo-guṇas* under their subjection. They worship Hari, of the nature of Prāṇa-vayu, Higher than the Highest. Their *mantra* is this: 'He has entered into all the living beings and nourishes them by *prāṇa* and other faculties; He is the Internal Ruler of all and the Supreme Controller; this Universe is under His control; let Him protect and nourish us.'

O Nārada! Next to this Dadhi Sāgara is Puṣkara Dvīpa; it is twice as large as Śāka Dvīpa. It is surrounded by the Dudha Sāgar (ocean of milk) all twice as large. The leaves of Puṣkara tree that shines in the Puṣkara Dvīpa are fiery like golden flames; they are as clean and pure. *Crores* and *crores* of leaves, golden in color ornament this Tree. Vāsudeva, the *guru* of all the Lokas, has created this Puṣkara Dvīpa as the seat of Paramesthī Brahmā, possessed of six extraordinary powers, for the purpose of creation. There is one mountain in this Dvīpa; it is divided into two parts, named Arvāchīna and Parāchīna. These form the boundaries of the two Varṣas. The mountain

is one *ayuta yojana* high and one *ayuta yojana* wide. There are four cities on the four sides. Indra and the three other Lokapālas are the lords of these cities. The Sun-god comes out from their top and circumambulating Meru, goes there again. The whole year is his *cakram*, circle of circuit; His path is Uttrāyanam and Dakśiṇāyanam. Vītihotra, the son of Priyavrata is the lord of this island. He distributed the two Varṣas amongst his two sons, Ramana and Dhātakī. They rule over the two Varṣas named also after them. Like the inhabitants of the above Varṣas, the people also get powers of themselves and worship devotedly God seated on the lotus and follow such path of the *yoga* as leads them to the *brahma-sālokyā-mukti*, etc. The *mantra* runs thus: 'We bow down to that One God without a Second, of the nature of Peace, Who is the Fruit of all *karmas*, Who is the seat of illumination of Brahmā, Who is established in Unity, and Who is worshipped by all the Lokas'."

Here ends the Thirteenth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the description of the remaining Dvīpas in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIV—Description of the Lokāloka Space

1-29. Nārāyaṇa said: "Next to the ocean of pure water, is the mountain called Lokāloka. It marks the sphere between the two countries Loka and Aloka. O Devarṣi! There is a land all of pure gold, beyond this ocean of pure water for a space equal to the distance between Mānasottara and Meru. This land is like a mirror; there are no beings here; the reason is, any substance placed on it would at once be converted into gold and nothing can be obtained out of it. O Nārada! No living beings can live there and therefore it is named Lokāloka. This is established always between the Loka and Aloka. God himself has made this as the boundary of the three *lokas*. The rays of the Sun, the Polar Star and all the planets are confined to this sphere; rather passing through its middle, the luminaries shed their luster on the three *lokas*. O Nārada! This great mountain is so lofty and capacious that the rays of the luminaries can never go out of it. The learned men say that the size, form, and indications of this mountain are such as

this is the one-fourth of five hundred times the size of the earth on its summit. The self-born Brahmā has placed very big elephants on all sides of it. Hear their names. These are Ṛṣabha, Puspachūda, Vāmana and Aparājita. These four elephants are said to hold all the *lokas* in their respective positions. Bhagavān Hari gives strength to these elephants and to Indra and others who are reckoned to be His *vibhūtis* (powers). Maṇifesting His *śuddha-sattva* and super-extraordinary powers, and united with *animā, laghimā* etc., the eight *siddhis*, He is reigning there surrounded by His *pāriśadas* Viśvaksena and others. He is the one God of all; He is without a second. For the welfare of all, He is holding Sudarśana and His various other weapons; and the powers of His arms are great. He is His own Cause and at all times He pervades all in and through. He is Eternal. This Universe is upheld by His extraordinary power Māyā for its preservation. He remains in this form until the end of the *kalpa*. The inner width described above, determines the width of *āloka*. For it is situated outside the above *loka*. Beyond the mountain Lokāloka is said to lie the pure path leading to Yogeśvara within the egg-shaped ellipsoid formed by the Heaven and Earth. The inner dimension of this ellipsoid is twenty-five *koti yojanas*. When this egg becomes unconscious (lifeless), the Sun enters within it in the form of Vairāja. Hence the Sun is called Mārtanda. He is Hiraṇyagarbha, when He is born from this Golden Egg. It is this Sun that ordains the quarters, *ākāśa*, Heaven and Earth, etc., in their proper spheres and divisions. This Sun is the *ātmā* of *svarga* and *mokṣa*, hell and other lower regions, of the Devas, men, birds, reptiles, trees and all other living beings; and He is the Presiding Deity of their sight. O Nārada! Its width is *pañchāśat koti yojanas* and its height or depth is twenty-five *koti yojanas*. If as the two halves of a gram are of the same size, so the Earth and Heaven are of equal size. The space enclosed between them is called *antarīksa;* the Sun-god, the foremost of the planets, being situated in the middle, gives light and illumines and heats the three *lokas*. He goes by the path of Uttarāyana and therefore His motion becomes slow (His motion becomes *mandagati*). The Sun then getting up higher prolongs the day time. Similarly when the Sun follows the path of Dakśiṇāyana, He gets *śīghra-gati* and not going up so high, shortens the daytime. Again when He comes at the Equator, He

maintains an even position, and the day and night become equal. When the Sun is in the signs Aries (Mesa) and Libra (Tulā), then the day and night become equal. When the Sun traverses the five signs Taurus, Gemini, etc., the day becomes longer and when the Sun traverses the five signs Scorpio to Aquarius, the day becomes shorter and the night becomes longer."

Here ends the Fourteenth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the description of the Lokāloka space in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XV—the Motion of the Sun

1-45. Nārāyaṇa said: O Nārada! I will now describe the motion of the Sun. Hear. It is of three kinds; *śīghra* (perihelionic), *manda* (aphelionic), and even. O Surasattama! Every planet has three positions. The name of the *madhyagati* position is Jāradgava, the name of the northern position is Airāvata; and the name of the southern position is Vaiśvānara. The *nakṣatras* Aśvinī, Krittikā and Bharanī are known by the term *nāgavīthī*. Rohinī, Ārdrā, and Mrigaśirā are named *gajavīthī*; Pusyā, Aślesā, and Punarvasu are named *airavatīvīthī*. The three above-mentioned *vīthīs* are called *uttara-mārga*. Purvaphalgunī, Uttara Phalgunī and Maghā are named *ārsabhī-vīthī*. Hastā, Citrā and Svātī are called *govīthī;* Jyesthā, Viśākhā and Anurādhā are named *jāradgavī-vīthī*. These three *vīthīs* are named *madhyamā-mārga*. Mūlā, Purbāsādhā, Uttarāsādhā are termed *ajavīthī;* Śravanā, Dhanisthā and Śatabhisā are termed *mṛga-vīthī*. Uttara Bhādrapada, Purvabhādrapada, and Revatī are called *vaiśvānarī-vīthī*. These three *vīthīs* (paths) are called *daksina-mārga*. During the Uttarāyana time, as Dhruva attracts the rope of air from both the sides of the Yuga, orbit (or axis), the chariot of the Sun ascends, (i.e., is drawn up by the rope). Thus when the Sun enters within the sphere, the motion of the chariot becomes slower and the day is lengthened and the night is shortened. O Sura Sattama! Know this to be the course of the path of the Sun.

When the cord draws towards the south, the Chariot descends and as the Sun then comes out of the sphere, the motion becomes quick. The day shortens and the night is lengthened. Again when the cord is neither tightened nor is it slackened, rather its motion is exactly midway, the Sun also remains in a medium position, his Chariot enters within a sphere of equilibrium and the day and night become equal. When the cord of air, in a state of equilibrium is attracted by the Polar Star, then it is that the Sun and the Solar system revolves; and when the Polar Star slackens its attraction over the cord of air, the Sun coming out of the middle sphere, revolves; and the Solar system also revolves.

On the east of Meru is established the city of Indra; the Devas dwell there. It is called therefore Devadhānikā. On the south of Meru is the famous city of Yama, the God of Death, named Samyamanī. On the west of Meru, is the great city of Varuṇa, named Nimnochanī. On the north of Meru is the city of the Moon, named Vibhāvarī. O Nārada! The Brahmavādīs say that the Sun first rises in the city of Indra. At noon the Sun goes to Samyamanī; at evening the Sun goes to Nimnochanī and He is said to set. In the night the Sun remains in Vibhāvarī. O Muni! The going of the Sun round Meru is the cause of all the beings getting themselves engaged in their respective duties. The inhabitants of the Meru see the Sun always in the central position. The Sun moves on, eastwards towards the stars, keeping the Meru to his left; but if the Zodiac be taken into account, it would appear that the Meru is left towards the south of the Sun. The rising and the setting of the Sun are always considered in front of Him. O Devarṣi! Every point, every quarter, every person, seeing the Sun says that the Sun has risen there; again where he becomes invisible, He is considered to set there. The Sun always exists; so there is no rising nor setting for Him. It is His appearance and disappearance that make men say that the Sun rises or sets. When the Sun is in the Indra’s city, He illumines the three cities, those of Indra, Yama, and the Moon and illumines the northeast and east-west corners. So when He rests in the city of Fire, he illumines north-east, east-west, and southwest corners, and at the same time the cities of Indra and Yama; and so on for the other cities and corners.

O Nārada! Mount Meru is situated towards the north of all the Dvīpas and Varṣas. So whenever any person sees the Sun rise he calls that side east. But Meru exists towards the left of the Sun; so it is said. If the Sun travels in 15 Ghatikās, the distance from Indrapurī to Yamapurī, He is said to travel within that time a distance equal to 21⁄4 *kotis*, 121⁄2 *lakhs* and 25000 *yojanas* (a total of 22,695,000 *yojanas*). The thousand-eyed and thousand-rayed Sun-God is the maṇifester of time. He travels in the aforesaid way the cities of Varuṇa, Chandra and Indra respectively. He is the diadem of the Svarloka; and the Zodiac is his *ātman*. He travels thus to mark off time to all persons. O Nārada! The Moon and the other planets and stars rise and set in the aforesaid manner. Thus the powerful chariot of the Sun travels in a Muhūrta 142,00,000 (142 *lakhs*) *yojanas*. By the force of *pravaha-vāyu* (air), the Sun God, the Incarnation of the *Vedas* travels round the cities, the Zodiac, in one *samvatsara* (year). The wheel of the Sun's Chariot is one year; twelve months are the spokes; three *cāturmāsyas* are the nave and the six seasons are the outer ring or circumference of the wheel. The learned men call this chariot the *samvatsara* (one year). The axis or axle points to Meru on one side and to Mānasottara mountain on the other. The end or circumference of the wheel marks off other divisions of the time as Kalā, Kāsthā, Muhūrta, Yāma, Parahara, day and night, and fortnights. The wheel is fixed on the nave. The Sun goes on this wheel, like an oilman's on his oil-machine, round and round the Mānasottara mountain. The eastern side of the wheel is on that axis and the other part is fixed on the Pole Star. The dimension of the first axis is 15,750,000 *yojanas*. The second axis measures one-fourth of the above (3,937,500 *yojanas*). It resembles the axis of an oil-machine. The upper side of that is considered to belong to the Sun. The seat of the Sun on his chariot measures 36 *lakh yojanas* wide. The *yuga* measures in length one fourth of the above dimensions, that of his seat. The Chariot is is moved by seven horses, consisting of the seven *chhandas*—Gāyatrī, etc. —driven by Aruna. The horses carry the Sun for the happiness of all. Though the charioteer sits in front of the Sun, his face is turned towards the west. He does his work as a charioteer in that state. Sixty thousand Vālakhilya Ṛṣis the size of a thumb, chant the sweet Vedic hymns before Him. Other Ṛṣis, Apsarās, Uragas, Grāmanīs, Rākṣasas, and all the Devas,

each divided in groups of seven, worship that highly lustrous Sun-god monthly. The earth measures 90,152,000 *krośa yuga yojanas*. The Sun passes over this distance in a moment. He does not take rest in his this work even for a day; no, not even for a moment."

Here ends the Fifteenth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the motion of the Sun in the MahāPurāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18000 verses, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVI—the Motion of the Planets

Śrī Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! Now hear the wonderful movements of the planets and their positions. The auspicious and inauspicious events of mankind are due to the different movements of these planets. As a potter's wheel goes round and round, the motion of the insects crawling on the wheel appears in a contrary direction, so the motion of the Sun and other planets moving on the Zodiac composed of the *rāśīs* (12 Zodiacal constellations) which again always moves round the Meru as an axle, appears different. Their motion from one *nakṣatra* to another and from one constellation to another appears so likewise. These two motions therefore are not contradictory but are consistent; so it is settled everywhere by the learned Paṇḍitas (as being subservient to the Zodiac).

O Nārada! He Who is the Origin of all, Who is the *ādi-puruṣa*, from Whom all these have sprung, Who is endowed with six extraordinary powers, in Whom all this *prapañcha*, this material world composed of five elements remains, that Nārāyaṇa, roaming about, has divided the *trayī-ātmā* into twelve parts for the perfect happiness of all and for *karma-śuddhi* (the purification of *karma*). The sages furnished with *jñāna* and *vijñāṇa* have thus argued on the point, following the path as laid out in the *Vedas*. Sūrya Nārāyaṇa, moving on in the six seasons, spring, etc., has established, cold, heat, etc., as the *dharma* of the seasons, duly for the fructification of the *karmas* of the individual beings. Those persons that worship this *ādipuruṣa* with devotion, according to the knowledge of the *Vedas,* the customs and

usages of *varṇa* (castes) and *āśrama* (*brahmācārya*, etc.) and with various performances of *yoga*, get their fruits respectively according to their desires. This Sun is the *ātman* of all the *lokas,* and resting on the Zodiac between the Heavens and the Earth, enjoys the twelve months in the twelve constellations, Aries, etc. These months are the limbs of the year. Two fortnights make one month. The 21 asterisms go to form one month according to the Solar measure, of the day and night.

The period that the Sun takes to travel over the two constellations is called *ṛtu* or a season (two months). The scientists say that each season is the limb of one *samvatsara*. The path that the Sun describes in the Zodiac within three seasons or half a year is called one *ayanam*. The time taken by the Sun with earth and heavens to make a circuit of the Zodiac is called one *vatsara* or year. This year is reckoned into five divisions as: *samvatsara, parivatsara, idāvatsara, anuvatsara* and *idvatsara*. These are caused by the *śīghra, manda*, and uniform motions of the Sun. So the Munis say.

Thus far the motion of the Sun has been described. Now hear that of the Moon. The Moon is situated one *lakh yojanas* higher than the Sun and shares with the motion of the Sun for one year; and She enjoys as well every month with the Sun in the shape of the dark and bright fortnights. The Moon, the Lord of Night and of the medicinal plants also enjoys the day and night by the help of one constellation or 27 *nakṣatras*. Thus, by Her *śīghragati*, the Moon enjoys the *nakṣatra*. During the bright fortnight, the Moon becomes more and more visible and gives pleasure to the Immortals by Her increasing phases; and, during the dark fortnight by Her waning phases, She delights the Pitṛs. She performs revolution in the day and night by Her both the phases of the bright and dark fortnights. Thus She becomes the Life and Soul of all the living beings. The Moon, endowed with the highest prosperity, travels one *nakṣatra* in thirty Muhūrtas. She is Full and the Soul without any beginning. She fructifies the desires (*saṅkalpas*) and resolves of all; hence She is called Manomaya. She is the Lord of all the medicinal plants (*osadhis*); hence She is called Annamaya. She is filled with nectar; hence She is called the Abode of Immortality and She gives *nirvāṇa*

(the final liberation) to all. Hence She is called Sudhākara. She nourishes and satisfies the Devas, Pitṛs, men, reptiles and trees; hence She is called Sarvamaya. By Her influence the asterisms travel over the three *lakh yojanas*. God Himself has made the *nakṣatra* Abhijit to revolve round Meru, along with the other *nakṣatras* in the Zodiac; so this is reckoned as the twenty-eighth *nakṣatra*.

The planet Venus (*Śukra*) is situated above the Moon two *lakh yojanas* high. He sometimes goes before the Sun, sometimes behind and sometimes along with Him. He is very powerful. His motion is of three kinds: *śīghra*, *manda* and uniform. He is generally favorable to all the persons and does for them many auspicious things. So it is stated in the *śāstras*. O Muni! Śukra, the illustrious scion of Bhṛgu, removes the obstacles to rains.

Next to Śukra, the planet Mercury (Budha) is situated two *lakh yojanas* high. Like Śukra, he, too, goes sometimes in front, sometimes behind and sometimes along with the Sun. And his motion too, is of three kinds: *śīghra, manda* and uniform. When Mercury the Son of Moon, is away from the Sun, then *ativāta* (strong winds, hurricanes), *abhrapāta* (the falling of meteors from the clouds) draught and other fears arise.

The planet Mars, the son of the Earth is situated two *lakh yojanas* higher. He travels one *rāśī* within three fortnights (45 days). This occurs when his motion is not retrograde. This Mars causes all sorts of mischief, evils and miseries to mankind.

The planet Jupiter (Guru) is situated two *lakh yojanas* higher. He passes through one *rāśī* in one year. When his motion is not retrograde, he is always in favor with the *brahma-vādis*. Next to Bṛhaspati, comes the planet Saturn (Śani), the son of the Sun, two *lakh yojanas* higher. He takes thirty months to pass over one *rāśī*. This planet causes all sorts of unrest and miseries to all. Therefore He is called a *manda-graha* (a malefic planet). Next to Saturn is situated the Saptarṣi-maṇḍala, the Great Bear, eleven *lakh yojanas* higher up. O Muni! The seven planets always do special favors to all. These circumambulate the Viṣṇupada, the Polar Star."

Here ends the Sixteenth Chapter in the Eighth Skandha on the motion of the planets in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVII—the Dhruva Maṇḍalam

1-29. Nārāyaṇa said: "Beyond the Saptaṛṣi-maṇḍala (the Great Bear), thirteen *lakh yojanas* higher, is situated Viṣṇu's *paramam-padam* (the highest place of Viṣṇu). The Great Bhāgavata (devotee of God), the most respectful Śrīṁān Dhruva, the son of Uttānapāda, is established there with Indra, Agṇi, Kaśyapa, Dharma and the Nakṣatras. The visitors always pay their respects to him. He is the patron of those who live until the end of a *kalpa*. He is engaged in serving the lotus feet of Bhagavān. He has been made by God Himself the pillar round whom all the planets, stars and luminary bodies are revolving always and with great force in the Zodiac and in the celestial Heavens. The Devas also worship him. He, resplendent in his own glory, illumines and maṇifests all. As beasts tied to yoke go on untiring, so the planets and stars, fixed on the Zodiac, go quickly round and round this Dhruva, the Pole Star; some nearer, some further distant in spheres, propelled by Vāyu. As hawks hover round in the sky, so the planets go completely round and round under their own *karmas,* controlled by Vāyu in the sky. Thus all the luminaries do not fall to the ground, as they are kept up in their respective positions by the favor of the union of Prakṛti and Puruṣa. Some say that this *jyotis-cakra*, the celestial Heavens (the Zodiac) is *śiśumāra*. It is kept duly in its position for the purpose of holding things up by the power of Bhagavān. Hence it does not fall. It is resting with its body coiled round and with its head lower down.

O Muni! Dhruva, the son of Uttānapāda is staying at the tail end. And in addition to him, also at the tail rests Brahmā, the sinless Prajāpati, worshipped by the Gods, Agṇi, Indra and Dharma. Thus the creation is at the tail and the Saptaṛṣi-maṇḍala is staying at his waist. Thus the celestial wheel (*jyotis-cakra*) is resting with his coils turned in a right-hand direction. On his right side are found the Uttarāyana Nakṣatras, fourteen in number

from Abhijit to Punarvasu, and on his left side are found the other fourteen Dakśiṇāyanam Nakṣatras, from Pusyā to Uttarāsādhā. O son of Brahmā! Thus the *nakṣatras* form the coil-shaped body of the *śiśumāra*, the Zodiac—half the *nakṣatras* on one side and the other half on the other. His back is on the Heavenly Ganges named Ajavīthī. Punarvasu and Pusyā form the right and left side of the loins; Ārdrā and Aśleśā form the right and left feet (westward); Abhijit and Uttarāsādha form the right and left nostrils. O Devaṛṣi! Śravanā and Pūrvāsādhā form the right and left eyes respectively; so say the persons that form the *kalpanās* (fancies). Dhanisthā and Mūlā form his right and left ears; Maghā, etc., the eight Dakśiṇāyanam Nakṣatras form the bones on the left side. O Muni! Mṛgasīrsa, the Uttarāyana Nakṣatras form the bones on his right side, Śatabhisā and Jyesthā form the right and left shoulders. Agasti (Canopus) forms the upper jaw and Yama, the lower jaw. The planet Mars forms his face; Saturn forms his organ of generation; Bṛhaspati forms the hump on the shoulders; the Sun, the Lord of the planets, forms his breast; Nārāyaṇa remains in the heart; and the Moon is in his mind. Śiśumāra is also the constellation Dolphinus and is sometimes meant for the polar star. O Nārada! The two Aśvins form the nipples on his breast; Uśanā forms his navel; the Mercury is his Prāṇa and Apāna; Rāhu is his neck, Ketu is all over his body, and the stars are reigning all over the hairs of his body. This Zodiac is the body composed of the Devas of that all-pervading Bhagavān. So every intelligent person should daily meditate on this *śiśumāra* in the *sandhyā* time, with perfect purity, keeping himself *mauna* (silent), and with his whole heart. Then he should repeat the following *mantras* and get up and say: 'Thou art the substratum of all the luminaries, we bow down to Thee; Thou createst and destroyest all. Thou art the Lord of all the celestials. Thou art the *ādi-puruṣa*, the foremost of all the Puruṣas; we meditate fully on Thee. The planets, *nakṣatras* and the stars are Thy body. The Daiva is established in Thee alone. Thou destroyest the sins of those that compose the *mantras*. The sins are completely destroyed for the time being of him who bows down or remembers Thee in the morning, afternoon and evening'."

Here ends the Seventeenth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the Dhruva Maṇḍalam in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVIII—the Narrative of Rāhu Maṇḍalam

1-9. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Devarṣi! The sphere of Rāhu (the ascending node of the Moon) is situated one *ayuta yojanas* below the Sun. Rāhu, the son of Simhikā is moving there like a *nakṣatra*. This Rāhu swallows up both the Sun and the Moon; he has got immortality and capability to travel in the sky. The Sun's rays go up to one *ayuta yojanas*. The Asura Rāhu thus covers his rays. So the sphere of the Moon extends up to twelve thousand *yojanas*. Rāhu covers the field of the thirteen thousand *yojanas*. So he covers both the Sun and the Moon. Desiring to take vengeance of their previous enmity, he covers them during the time of *parva* (festivals). This planet wants to cover them from a distance. Hearing this, Bhagavān Viṣṇu hurls His Sudarśan Chakra against Rāhu. This Chakra (disc) is encircled with the fiery flames and is very terrible. When all the quarters were filled with its violent flames, Rāhu became instantly alarmed and fled away from the distance. O Devarṣi! This is known as an eclipse amongst the mortals. Below the sphere of Rāhu, there are the other pure *lokas* situated. O Sattama! The Siddhas, Chāranas, and Vidyādharas live in those *lokas*. Their dimensions are one *ayuta yojanas*.

10. O Devarṣi! Below them live the Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Piśāchas, Pretas and Bhūtas with their excellent *vihāras* (residences).

11-34. The learned people call this *antarīksa*. It extends up to where the wind blows violently and the clouds appear. O best of the twice-born! Below this *antarīksa* is this earth, measuring one hundred *yojanas*. All the articles and things of the earth are found here; birds herons, cranes and ducks all fly over the earth. The earth extends up to this.

Now is described the configuration of the earth. O Devarṣi! In the lower part of this earth there are seven places (caves or nether regions). Their

diameter is one *ayuta yojanas*. In all the seasons, all sorts of enjoyments can be had at these places. The first is Atala; the second is Vitala. Next come in order: Sutala, Talātala, Mahātala. Rasātala, and lastly (the seventh) the Pātāla. O Vipra! Thus the seven holes or subterranean regions are reckoned. These are termed the Vila-Svargas and they yield the happinesses, greater than those of the Heavens. These are all filled with lovely amorous enjoyments, prosperity and happiness. They are crowded with gardens and *vihāras* (the places of enjoyment). And these *vihāras* are all decorated tastefully so as to furnish special tastes of enjoyment. The powerful Daityas, Dānavas, and Snakes enjoy here great happiness incessantly, united lovingly with their sons, wives and friends. The householders also pass their time in ease and enjoyments, surrounded by their friends and attendants. They are all Māyāvis (Magicians) and their resolves are not thwarted; they are more than God in this respect and they are filled with desires. They all live with joy in enjoyments, and they find pleasure in all the seasons. Māyā, the Lord of Māyā had built separate cities, as he liked, in those nether regions. Besides he has created thousands of dwelling-houses, palaces, and town-gates, studded with gems and jewels.

The assembly halls, Chatvaras, and Chaityas are elaborately decorated and rare even to the Suras. The Nāgas and Asuras live in those houses with their consorts; doves and pigeons and female Mayinā birds are hovering there. In those places many plots are marked out artificially, and excellent rows of palatial buildings of the Lords of those *vihāras* adorn there. Very big gardens also exist there. All these cheer the minds; and to add to their beauty, many places of fruits and flowers are close by, fit for the comfort and enjoyments of the ladies. The tanks and pools of water are crowded with various birds; the lakes are filled with clear waters and the *pāthīna* fishes abound there. Aquatic animals move in the waters, violently agitating them. Various kinds of lotuses, Kumud, Utpala, Kahlāra, blue lotus and red lotus are fully blown in these lakes and reservoirs of water. The gardens there are all overcrowded with the *vihāras* of the inhabitants and echo with sweet melodious music, pleasing to the senses. For these places seem to vie with the Heavens. No fear is there either during the day

or during the night. The gems on the crest of snakes constantly illumine the environment and there is no darkness there at any time. The food there is prepared with divine medicines and they drink and bathe with these medicinal plants; so no disease attacks them. Old age, fever, indigestion, paleness, sweats, bad smells, loss of energy or any other source of trouble cannot trouble them. The people are always happy and good. Only they fear the *teja* of Bhagavān and His Sudarśan disc; and they fear nothing else. When the *teja* of Bhagavān enters, the women's abortions take place."

Here ends the Eighteenth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the narrative of Rāhu Maṇḍalam in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIX—the Narrative of Atala, etc.

1-32. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Vipra! In the first beautiful region Atala, the exceedingly haughty son of the Dānava Māyā, named Bala, is living. He has created the ninety-six Māyās. All the requisites of the inhabitants are obtained by them. The other Māyāvis know one or two of these. None of them are capable to know all, as they are exceedingly difficult to be carried out. When this powerful Bala yawned, the three classes of women were produced, fascinating to all the *lokas*. They were named Pumśchalī (unchaste woman) Svairinī, (adultress) and Kāminī (lovely women). When any man, beautiful and lovely to them, enters into their Atala region, they, with the help of the *hātaka* sentiment (of love), generate in him, while in solitude, the power to enjoy (copulate), and with their sweet smiles and amorous lovely looks and with great caution embrace him thoroughly and begin to converse with him and with amorous gestures and postures, and thus please him well. When the people enjoy this *hātaka-rasa*, they think often and often, that they themselves have become gods, they have become *siddhas* and powerful like *ayuta* elephants; being blind with vanity and finding them endowed with powers and prosperity, they think themselves so repeatedly and constantly. O Nārada! Thus the position in Atala has been described.

Now hear the description of the second subterranean region, Vitala. Vitala is situated below the earth. There Bhagavān Bhava, worshipped by all the Devas, has assumed the name of Hātakeśvara and is staying there coupled with Bhavānī, surrounded by His attendants specially for the increase of the creation of Brahmā. The river Hātaki flows there and has Her origin from the essences (semen) of them both. Fire, augmented by the help of the wind, begins to drink it. When the Fire leaves that, making a *phutkāra* noise (i.e., blowing out air through the mouth), the gold named Hātaka, is created. This gold is very much liked by the Daityas. The Daitya women always use this gold for their ornaments.

Below Vitala is Sutala. It is reckoned as of some special importance. O Muni! the highly meritorious Bali, the son of Virochana lives here. Bhagavān Vāsudeva brought down this Bali into Sutala for the welfare of Indra. He assumed the body of Trivikrama and gave to Bali all the wealth of the three *lokas*, all the Lakṣmī went to him and installed him in the position of the Lord of the Daityas. What more can be said than this, that what prosperity, wealth and riches that Indra could not obtain, that Śrī Lakṣmī-Devī Herself has followed Bali. Bali, as the Lord of Sutala, has become entirely fearless, remains there up to this day and is worshipping Vāsudeva. O Nārada! It is said by the high-minded persons that when Vāsudeva Himself, the controller of all, appeared as a beggar, Bali gave him land; therefore, on account of making gift to a good person, he acquired so much prosperity. But this cannot be reasonable. For it is not at all reasonable to cast the effects of making this gift on Nārāyaṇa, O Nārada! Who is Self-maṇifest by His own extraordinary glory, Who is Himself filled with all *aiśvarya* (prosperity) and Who can bestow the highest goal of life, liberation and other requirements of men. This Nārāyaṇa is the Deva of the Devas; if anybody takes His name, even in the greatest distress, he gets himself immediately freed from the *guṇas*, the cause of bondage due to his *karma*. All persons perform many *yogas* and follow the paths advised by the Sāṅkhya method, with their minds directed to the All-Controller Bhagavān, to abandon all sorts of troubles and miseries. O Nārada! Know that Bhagavān does not show us His favor when he gives us greatest wealth

and prosperity. For wealth and riches are the offspring of Māyā and the source of all worries, miseries and mental troubles; and one is liable to forget Bhagavān when one gets such a wealth. Bhagavān is pervading all this universe and is full of wisdom; and He is seeing always all the ways and means; He took away, in the way of begging, rather cheated all that Bali had, leaving only his body; and at last, finding no other means, fastened him by the Varuṇa Pāśa (noose), threw him in the middle of the mountain cleft (cave) and then has stationed Himself at his door as a doorman. Once, out of his extreme devotion, Bali did not care at all for his difficulties, troubles, or miseries. Rather he gave out that Indra, whose minister is Bṛhaspati had acted very foolishly. For when Bhagavān becomes very graciously pleased, he wanted from Him ordinary wealth.

But what will the wealth of the *trilokas* avail? It is a quite insignificant thing. Surely, He is an illiterate and stupid brute who, for mere wealth, leaves Bhagavān, Who is the fountain of all good wishes to humaṇity. My grandfather Prahlāda, who was highly fortunate, who was devoted to God and always ready to do good to others, did not ask for anything other than the servantship of God (*dāsya-bhāva*). When his powerful father died, Bhagavān wanted to give him unbounded wealth; but the Bhāgavata (devoted) Prahlāda did not want that. None of us, who are marked with so many deficiencies can know the nature of Bhagavān Vāsudeva, Whose omnipotence cannot be compared and all these maṇifested worlds are but His *upādhis* (adjuncts, limitations). O Devaṛṣi! Thus Bali, the Lord of Daityas, the highly respected and renowned in all the Lokas, is reigning in Sutala. Hari Himself is his Door-keeper. Once King Rāvana, the source of torment to all the people, went out to conquer the whole world; and when he entered Sutala, that Hari, ever ready to show Grace to His devoted, threw him a distance of one *ayuta yojanas* by the toe of His foot. Thus by the grace of the Devadeva Vāsudeva, Bali is reigning in Sutala, and enjoying all sorts of pleasures, without any equal anywhere."

Here ends the Nineteenth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the narrative of the Atala, etc., the Pātālas in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the Mahā-Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XX—the Narrative of Talātala

1-37. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! The cave lower down than Sutala is Talātala! The Lord of Tripura, (the three cities) the great Māyā Dānava is the ruler of this region. Maheśvara, the doer of good to the three Bhuvanas, burnt his three cities; but at last, being pleased with his devotion, He rescued him. Thus Māyā, by the favor of that God, has regained his own kingdom and the enjoyments thereof. This Māyā Dānava is the Teacher (*āchārya*) of the Māyāvi sect and the cult thereof; and he is skilled in various Māyās or all sorts of the magic powers. All the fierce demons of cruel temper, worship him for their prosperities in their various enterprises.

Next to this Talātala is the most renowned Mahātala. The sons of Kadru, the very angry Snakes, live here. They are many-headed. O Vipra! I now mention to you the names of the famous amongst them: Kuhaka, Takṣaka, Susena and Kāliya. These all have very wide hoods and they all are very strong; they all are of cruel temper. Their kinsmen also are so. They are always afraid of Garuḍa, the King of birds. Surrounded with their sons, wives, friends and acquaintances, they live happily, well skilled in various sports and pleasures.

Below this Mahātala is Rasātala. The Daityas, Dānavas and Pani Asuras live there. Besides these, there live the Nivāta Kavacas of the Hiraṅyapura city and the Asuras named Kāleyas, the enemies of the Devas. These all are naturally very energetic and brave; their powers are baffled by the *tejas* of Bhagavān and they live like snakes in this region. The other Asuras that were driven and were afraid of the *mantras* uttered by Saramā, the messenger of Indra, live here too.

O Nārada! Lower down is Pātāla, where live Vāsuki, the chief of the snakes, and others named Śankha, Kulika, Śveta, Dhananjaya,

Mahāśankha, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Śankhachūda, Kamvala, Aśvatara, and Devopadattaka, all very angry, of wide hoods, and virulently poisonous. Some of these have five heads, some seven hoods, some ten; some a hundred, some others have a thousand heads, while some others have on their crests exceedingly luminous jewels. By their rays, they dispel the darkness of the nether regions; but they are awfully prone to anger. At the bottom of this Pātāla, and at a distance of the thirty *yojanas,* the portion of Bhagavān in the shape of the infinite darkness is reigning there. O Devaṛṣi! All the Devas worship this form. The devotees call Him by the name of Saṅkarṣaṇa, as He is the maṇifested emblem of *ahaṁ* ('I am') and the common ground where the seer and the seen blend into one. He is the thousand-headed controller of all, moving and non-moving; He is of infinite forms; He is Śesa; this whole universe is being held as a mustard seed on His head; He is of the nature of intelligence and bliss, and He is Self-maṇifest. When he wants to destroy all this during the *pralaya*, the very powerful Saṅkarṣaṇa Rudra, well arrayed with the eleven *vyūha* arrangements (military squadrons) springs up from Him. From His central eyebrow, He looks wide with His three eyes, raising His trident, resplendent with three flames. All the prominent principal snakes, ruling over many others, come to Him during the nights filled with devotion surrounded with *bhaktas* (devotees) and bow down to Him with their heads bent low and look at each other's faces, enlightened with the lights from the jewels shining with clear luster, on the nails of the red toes of His Lotus feet. At that time their faces become brilliant with the rays emitting from the jewels on the top of their very gay encircled hoods; and their cheeks look beautiful and shining. The daughters of the Nāga Rāja also do like this; when very beautiful rays come out of their perfectly excellent bodies. Their arms are wide extended; they look very clear and they are beautifully white. They use always sandalwood paste, Aguru and Kāsmīri unguents. Being overpowered by the amorous passion, due to their contact with those scented things, they look at Him with bashful glances and sweet smiles and expect *āsis* (benedictions) from Him. And then His eyes roll maddened with love, and express signs of kindness and mercy. Bhagavān Ananta Deva is of boundless strength; His attributes are infinite; He is the ocean of

infinite qualities. He is the ādi-Deva, of a very good nature and His nature is highly luminous. He has abandoned anger and envy and He wants the welfare of all. All the Devas worship Him and He is the repository of all *sāttvik* qualities.

The Devas, Siddhas, Asuras, Uragas, Vidyādharas, Gandharvas, and Munis always meditate on Him. On account of His constant *mada-rāga* (enthusiasm and intoxication), His visage appears intoxicated and His eyes look perturbed with emotions. He is always pleasing to those who surround him and to the Devas by His sweet nectar-like words.

The Vaijayantī garland hangs from His neck; it never wanes and it is always decorated with the fresh and clear Tulasī leaves. The maddened bees make their humming noises incessantly and thus add to the beauty. He is the Deva of the Devas, He wears a blue-colored cloth and He is ornamented with only one earring. He is the God Viṣṇu, undecaying and immutable; resting His fleshy arms on the *halakakuda* (the lofty portion of the plough), He is upholding the golden girdle as the elephant Airāvata of Indra upholds the golden girdle. O Nārada! The devotees describe Him as the source of the *līlā* of the universe and the controller of the Devas."

Here ends the Twentieth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the narrative of the Talātala in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXI—the Narrative of hells

1-9. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Devarṣi! Sanātana, the son of Brahmā, recites thus in the assembly of the Devas, the glories of Bhagavān Ananta Deva, and worships Him, thus: 'How can one of ordinary sight and understanding grasp the real nature of Brahman, Whose mere glance enables Prakṛti to work Her *guṇas* in the creation, preservation and destruction of this Universe! Him Whose nature has no beginning nor end; Who, though one, has created all this *prapañcha* (the universe of five elements) as a covering of the *ātman* (the true Self). He has made *sat* and *asat* out of his infinite

compassion, this universe full of cause and effect, visible in His one and only *śuddha-sattva* nature where even the very powerful lion is imitating his *līlā* (Pastime), void of all defects, to bring under His control the minds of His own kinsmen. Ananta Deva is the ruling principle in the fourth dimensional space. To Whom else then, persons desirous of Mokṣa will take refuge—the mere hearing or reciting of Whose name, in a fallen or a distressed condition, or merely in jest, instantly takes away all sins! He is upholding the earth with the mountains, oceans, rivers and all the beings as if an atom on his thousand heads. He is infinite. His power knows no decrease at any time. No one can describe his actions even if one had thousand tongues to speak. He is of infinite strength, of endless high qualities and of unlimited understanding. Thus staying at the bottom of the earth, Bhagavān Ananta Deva, unaided and independent, easily upholds this earth for her protection. O Muni! People get the fruits of their actions and desires as they want and as they have followed the paths laid down in the *śāstras* and become accordingly kings, men, deer or birds or other creatures in other states. O Nārada! Thus I have described, as you questioned me before, the various and dissimilar fruits of various actions, done according to the dictates of *dharma* and the *śāstras*."

10. Nārada said: "O Bhagavān! Kindly describe to me now why has Bhagavān created so many diversities, when the *karmas* done by the *jīvas* are the same."

11-28. Nārayana said: "O Nārada! So many different states arise because the *śraddhās* of the doers are so very different. The fruits differ because the *śraddhās* vary—some being *sāttvik*, some *rājasik* and some *tāmasik*. If the *śraddhā* be *sāttvik*, happiness comes always; if it be *rājasik*, incessant pain and misery is the result; if it be *tāmasik*, misery comes and the loss of the knowledge of good or bad is the result. Thus the fruits differ as the *śraddhā* varies. O best of Dvījas! Thousands and thousands of states occur to men as the result of their *karmas*, done under the influence of the beginningless *avidyā* (nescience). O Dvījottama! I will now deal in detail with their varieties; hear.

Behind this *triloki*, below this earth and above the Atala, the Pitṛs named Agṇisvāttas and other forefathers live. Those Pitṛs stay there, and practicing deep *samādhi*, they always offer their best blessings to their own *gotra* (family) respectively. There Yama, the God of the Pitṛs gives punishment to the dead brought there by His messengers according to their *karmas* and faults. By the command of Bhagavān, Yama, surrounded by his own *gaṇas* (persons), judges and does full justice according to the *karmas* that they had done and the sins they had committed. He sends always those of his messengers who obey his order and know the *tattva* of *dharma*, and who are posted to their respective duties, to carry out what he commands. The writers of the *śāstras* describe twenty-one *narakas* or hells; others say there are twenty-eight hells. Now hear their names: Tāmisra, Andha Tāmisra, Raurava, Mahāraurava, Kumbhīpāka, Kālasūtra, Asipatrakānana, śūkaramukha, Andhakūpa, Krimibhojana, Taptamūrti, Samdamśa, Vajrakantaka, śālmalī, Vaitaranī, Pūyoda, Prāṇarodha, Viśasana, Lālābhaksa, Sārameyādana, Avīchi, Apahpāna, Ksārakardama, Raksogana, Sambhoja, śūlaprota, Dandaśūka, Avatārodha, Paryāvartanaka, and Sūchimukha. These are the twenty-eight *narakas* or hells.

These hells are very tormenting. O son of Brahmā! The embodied beings (*jīvas*) suffer these according to their own *karmas* respectively."

Here ends the Twenty-first Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the narrative of hells in the Mahā Purāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXII—the Sins Leading to Hells

1. Nārada said: "O Everlasting One! O Muni! Now describe the various actions that lead to these tormenting hells. I like to hear about them in detail."

2-52. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Devarṣi! He who steals another's sons, wives and riches, the wicked fellow is taken to Yama by his messengers. Tied down hard and fast by the terrible messengers of Yama with the Kāla rope (rope

of time), he is taken to the Tāmisra hell, the place of many torments. There Yama's attendants punish him, beat him and threaten him; he becomes stupefied, and feels himself very weak, distressed and ultimately faints. He who deceives another's husband and enjoys his wives, Yama's servants drag down to Andha Tāmisra hell. There he suffers any amount of pain and suffering. He instantly loses his eyesight and his brain gets upset. His state resembles that of a tree when its trunk is broken. For this reason the ancient sages called this Andha Tāmisra. He who being subject to 'my' and 'mine' quarrels with others and being very much attached, maintains his family, leaves his families here and goes with his bad tendencies to the Raurava hell, very horrible to all. The animals whom he injured and killed before in this world, assume the form of *ruru* animals and torment him in the next. For this reason, the intelligent knowers of the *Purāṇas* call this Raurava. The ancients say that the *ruru* is more cruel and ferocious than snakes. These animals live in that hell; hence it is termed Mahāraurava. He who torments others, goes to this hell and these *rurus*, flesh-eaters, spring on his body and bite and eat his flesh. He who cooks other animals and birds, that cruel and ferocious, thus deluded, is cooked in return in hot oil in the Kumbhīpāka hell by the Yamadūtas for a thousand years. He who quarrels with his Pitṛs and the Brāhmaṇas, is taken by the Yamadūtas to the Kālasūtra hell, and there burnt by the fire and Sun. There that hellish person, being troubled very much inside and outside by hunger and thirst, sometimes sits, sometimes sleeps, sometimes walks, and sometimes runs hither and thither.

O Devaṛṣi! He who transgresses the path of the *Vedas* in times other than those of calamity and danger, and follows other paths even to a trifling distance, that sinner is taken by Yamadūtas to Asipatra Kānana and there whipped severely. Not being able to bear that, he runs wildly to and fro and is pierced by the sharpedged Asi leaves on both his sides. His whole body being cut asunder, he cries 'Oh! I am killed!' and faints away. Then feeling himself pained very much, he tumbles down at every step. Thus the sinner suffers for violating the path of the *Vedas*. The king or royal personage who gives orders of punishment not approved by *dharma*, and

hurts or punishes the body of a Brāhmaṇa, Yama's servants throw him down into the Śūkaramukha hell, and grind down his body with great force as a sugarcane is ground down. He then cries aloud bitterly, he faints and becomes stupefied. He is crushed by them and suffers all sorts of pains and miseries. Again he who enjoys the feelings of others when they are tormented, pains those insects who live on other's blood, etc., and who does not realize other's pains, goes as a punishment for that fault to the Andhakūpa Hell. There he is pained by beasts, birds, deers, reptiles, mosquitoes, bugs, louses, flies and Dandaśūkas and various other cruel animals. There he lives in his ugly body and roams like a beast. The man who, getting even a trifling wealth and foodstuff, does not perform the five Mahā Yajñās and gives not a share of that to the Devas and feeds his own belly with that like a crow, is taken by the ferocious Yamadūtas to the worst Krimibhojana Naraka for his sinful deeds. This hell is one *lakh yojanas* wide and is the reservoir of worms. It causes terror to the inhabitants of the hell. That sinner assumes the form of an insect and is eaten up on return by the insects, and thus passes his time there.

When a man does not give any share to the *atithis* or the guests and does not offer oblations to the fire before he eats his food, he too goes to the above hell. When a man in times other than that of great danger and distress, follows the livelihood of a thief and robs gold and jewels from a Brāhmaṇa or any other person, he is taken to this hell and the Yama's servants pierce and cut off his skin by a fiery hot iron cutter. When a man goes for an illicit cohabitation to one who is not fit to be approached, and when a woman goes similarly to an unapproachable man, both of them are taken, being whipped, to this hell by the servants of Yama! Where the man is obliged to embrace a fiery hot iron figure of woman and vice versa. When a man goes to all sorts of wombs for unnatural crimes, he is taken to Vajra Kantaka Naraka and placed on the top of an iron *śalmalī* wood. When a King or any royal personage, subject to the *pāsanda-dharma* (unrighteous path) breaks the boundary of a law, he for that sin goes to Vaitaranī, the ditch round that hell. There the aquatic animals eat his body all around. O Nārada! Yet neither his life nor his body parts from him. He is thrown, for

his *karma*, into the rivers filled with faeces, urine, puss, blood, hairs, bones, nails, flesh, marrow, fat, etc., and he becomes very much troubled.

Those who are the husbands of *vrisalīs* (girls under twelve years of age, who have attained menstruation; or the barren women), void of any *śaucha* (cleanliness) or shame and without any *āchāra-vyavahāra* (the following of one's natural customs and rites) and those who follow *paśvāchāra* (live like beasts), meet with a very hard fate and are thrown into this hell filled with faeces, urine, mucus, blood and other impurities and when they feel hungry, are forced to eat the above things. When those persons that are twice-born maintain dogs and asses, etc., and when they are addicted to hunting and kill beasts, birds and deer daily, for no reason, those evildoers are specially watched by the servants of Yama and when they retire, they tear them asunder by shooting bows at them. He who kills animals, engaged vainly in sacrifice and addicted to haughty tempers and habits, is thrown into this hell by the Yama's servants and whipped very severely. The twice-born that copulates blindly with a *savarnā* wife, is taken by the Yama's messengers into the hell filled with semen and he is made to drink that. Those who are addicted to robbery, who put fire to other's houses, who make others drink poison, those that are treacherous, and who destroy the interest of the villagers and other persons, those kings or the royal personages are taken after their death by the Yamadūtas to the Sārameyādana hell. There seven hundred and twenty dogs, very wonderful to behold, come furiously and with great force and energy, over them and feed on them. O Nārada! This hell is denominated as Sārameyādana Naraka and it is very horrible. Now I will describe to you the other hells Avīchi and others."

Here ends the Twenty-second Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the narrative of the sins leading to hells in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIII—Description of the Remaining Hells

1-31. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! When persons, impelled by sinful motives, always speak false at the time of giving evidence or at the time of taking or giving money, after their death go to the terrible hell named Avīchi. There, from the summit of a mountain one hundred *yojanas* high they are dropped at once down below with their heads inverted down. Here the solid ground looks like water and appears like waves. Therefore it is called Avīchi, resembling Avīchi waves. Here if the sinner's body be cut to small pieces, still he does not die; rather he gets a new body when his body is all cut to pieces. O son of Brahmā! When a man, be he a Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya, drinks Soma (wine) or due to inadvertence drinks wine, he is thrown into this hell. O Muni! Yama's servants make him drink molten iron. When a vile person being maddened by the pride of his self-learning, birth, austerities or *vārna* and *āśrama*, does not pay his respect duly to his superiors, he is thrown into the Ksārakardama hell with his head downwards. He suffers a tremendous pain there. When a man or woman out of delusion, performs human sacrifices (where men are immolated as victims), he or she has to eat the human flesh here. Those that killed before all sorts of beasts, come after their death into this abode of Yama, all united and like butchers, cut each other's flesh by pickaxes, etc., and drink their blood and dance and sing repeatedly. They do, in fact, what the terrible Rākṣasas do. When persons meet with the innocent persons, wishing to live in villages or forests and raise their confidence by various such means and make them attached and finally pierce them by pointed *śūlas* (trident) or pointed swords and kill them as if they were ordinary playthings, they are taken after their death by the Yamadūtas and thrown into Śūlādi Naraka (pierced by *śūlas*). They are pierced there by *śūlas* and become overpowered by hunger and thirst. Herons and cranes, with their sharp beaks hunt after them to and fro. Thus tormented, they remember all the sins done in their previous lives. Those who follow stray paths and trouble other beings as the serpents do fall into the Dandaśūka hell. Here worms with five faces and seven faces come from all sides and eat them as a fierce serpent devours a mouse. Those who confine persons in dark holes,

a dark room or a dark cave are taken by the servants of Death with their arms uplifted and confined to similar dark caves, filled with poison, fire and smoke. When a Brāhmaṇa householder, seeing a guest coming to his house at a reasonable (proper) time, casts a furious sinful glance at him as if to burn him, Death's attendants, the herons with thunderbolt like beaks, the crows, *vatas*, other birds and very fierce vultures all come and forcibly take out the eyes of that person who committed the aforesaid sins. When person elated with vanity of his riches become too haughty and doubt over their *gurus* and when their hearts and faces wither withal away, as it were, with the thoughts of their income and expenditure, and being always unhappy, hoard up money always like the Brahmā Piśāchas, Death's officers take them for these *karmas* to Sūchimukha Narakas and pierce all over his body with pins, as a tailor does with his cloth.

O Devaṛṣi! True, sinful persons thus suffer hundred thousand hells. All these are very painful and tormenting. Out of these the abovenamed twenty hells give the greatest sufferings. O Devaṛṣi! The sinners suffer various pains in hells and virtuous persons go to the several spheres where all sorts of happinesses and pleasures reign. O Mahārṣi! I have described to you many forms of practicing one's *sva-dharma;* yet know this verily, that the worship of the Devī Bhagavatī's gross form and of Her *virāt* (universal) form is the chief *dharma* of all persons. By worshipping the Devī, persons have not to go to the hells. In fact, when the Devī Bhagavatī is worshipped, She Herself arranges for crossing the person to the other shore of this ocean of transmigration of existence."

Here ends the Twenty-third Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the description of the remaining hells in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIV—Worship of the Devī

1-2. Nārada said: "O Bhagavān! of what sort is this *dharma*—the worship of the Devī? In what way shall we worship Her, so that She gives us the

highest place? What are the methods and forms of Her worship? Where and when shall we worship Her,so that the Durgā-Devī saves us from the above-mentioned hells?"

3-20. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Devarṣi! You are the foremost of the knowers of Truth. I will therefore tell you how the Devī gets pleased and how Her worship is conducted according to *dharma*. Hear attentively. O Nārada! I will also describe the nature of *sva-dharma*. Hear that also.

When one worships, with due rites and ceremonies, the Devī in this beginningless world, She Herself removes all the terrible dangers and difficulties. Hear the rules how the people worship the Devī. On the *pratīpat-tithi* (the first day after the Full or New Moon) one should worship the Devī with a present of rice, etc., with ghee (clarified butter) and give that to the Brāhmaṇas. Then one becomes completely free from any disease. On the second day (*dvītiyā-tithi*), one must serve the Mother of the Universe with sugar and give that to the Brāhmaṇas; he then becomes long-lived. On the third *tithi* on commencing the *pūjā*, the worshipper must give milk to the Devī and give that to a best Brāhmaṇa; he is then freed from all his troubles and ailings. On the fourth *tithi* the worshipper is to offer a cake of flour to the Devī and then give that to a Brāhmaṇa; no obstacles come to that man. On the fifth *tithi*, the worshipper is to offer plantains to the Devī and then to give that to the Brāhmaṇas; he thus becomes intelligent. On the sixth *tithi*, the worshipper gives honey to the Devī and then to a Brāhmaṇa; he gets thus the beauty of his body. On the seventh *tithi*, the Brāhmaṇa gives to the Devī the *naivedya* (an offering of rice, and other cooked food) with *gur* (raw sugar) and then offers that to the Brāhmaṇas; he then becomes freed from his mental sorrows. On the eighth day, if one gives coconut, one is freed of one's remorse, etc.; on the ninth, if anybody gives fried rice (*lāj*), he will have his happiness increased both in this world and in the next. O Muni! If on the tenth *tithi*, one offers to the Devī black *til* (sesamum) and then gives that to a Brāhmaṇa, he becomes free from the fear of death. If, on the eleventh *tithi*, (*ekādaśī*) one gives curd to the Devī and then to the Brāhmaṇa, one becomes a great

favorite of the Devī. If on the twelfth day, one offers to the Devī and to the Brāhmaṇa the *chipitaka* rice or grain, well parched and flattened one becomes a favorite of the Devī. If, on the thirteenth day one gives to Bhagavatī grains, and thenoffers that to a Brāhmaṇa, one gets progeny. If on the fourteenth day one gives the Devī the flour of fried barley or other grains (*śaktu*) and then that to a Brāhmaṇa, one becomes a favorite of Śiva. If on the Full Moon day, one offers to the Devī *pāyasa* and then that to a Brāhmaṇa, one's Pitṛs are uplifted to the higher regions.

21-42. O Muni! On the above *tithis*, if one forms daily *homa*, as stated in the Pūjā Chapter, the Devī becomes very pleased. The articles corresponding to the *tithi* as mentioned above destroy all the evils and inauspicious omens.

On Sunday, it is a rule to give an offering of *pāyasam* (preparation of rice, milk and sugar). On Monday, milk; on Tuesday, nice plantains; on Wednesday, fresh butter; on Thursday, *gur* or raw sugar, Friday, white sugar; and on Saturday, it is a rule to give the clarified butter of cow's milk. Now hear what should be offered on the *nakṣatras*. The following are the *naivedyas* offered on each of the *nakṣatras*, in due order beginning from Aśvinī: clarified butter (ghee), sesamum (*til*), sugar, curd, milk, *kilātak* (*mālāi* milk), *dadhikūrchi* (*mālāi* curd), *modaka* (a kind of sweetmeat, a confection), *phenikā*, *ghrita-mandaka* (a sweetmeat of wheat flour and gur), *vatapattra*, *ghritapura* (*ghior*), *vataka*, *kharjura* juice (datepalm), a sweetmeat of *gur* and gram, honey, *śūrana*, *gur pṛthuka*, grapes, datepalms, *chārakās*, *apūpa, navanīta* (fresh butter), *mudga, modaka*, and *mātuliṅga*.

Now hear what are given in the Viskambha and the other *yogas*. The World Mother becomes very much pleased when one offers to Her the following things: *gur*, honey, ghee, milk, curd, *takra, apūpa*, fresh butter, k*arkatī, kusmānda, modaka, panasa*, plantain, *jambu* (rose-apple), mango, sesamum, oranges, *dādima* (pomegranate), *badarī* (Jujube) the *dhātrī* (*āmalaki*) fruit, *pāyasa, pṛthuka*, gram, coconut, *jambīra, kaseru* and *śūrana*. Auspicious events occur when these are offered. Intelligent persons have thus decided to give the above on Viskambha and the other *yogas*.

Now hear: I will describe the things that are offered on the respective *karanas: kamsāra, mandaka, phenī, modaka, vatapattraka, ladduka, ghritapūra, til* (Sesamun), curd, ghee, and honey. These are to be offered devotedly to the Devī on the respective *karanas*.

Now I will describe to you the other offerings very pleasing to the Devī. Hear. O Nārada! Hear it with great attention and love. On the third *tithi* of the bright fortnight in the month of Chaitra, one is to worship duly the Madhūka tree and offer *pañcha-khādya* (the five kinds of food). So hear what articles are to be offered according to the rules that are laid down on the third day of the white fortnight of the other months: *gur* in the month of Vaiśākh; honey in Jyaiṣṭha; fresh butter in Āsādha; curd in Śrāvana; *śarkarā* in Bhādra; *pāyaśa* in Āśvin; pure milk in Kārtik; *phenī* in Agrahāyana; *dadhi-kūrchīkā* in Pausa; clarified butter of cow's milk in Māgha, and coconut offerings in the month of Phālguṇa. Thus one is to worship the Devī with these twelve of offerings in the twelve months respectively.

43-69. One should worship the Devī in the Madhūka tree with these names: Maṅgalā, Vaiṣṇavī, Māyā, Kāla-rātri, Duratyayā, Mahāmāyā, Mātangī, Kālī, Kāmalavāsinī, Śivā, Sahasracharanā, and Sarva-maṅgalarūpinī (one name for each of the 12 months). Finally, to bring the vow to a good issue and to have one's desires fulfilled with greater success, one is to sing *stotras* (hymns) to Māheśvarī, the Controller of all the gods, in that Madhūka tree, thus: 'Thou art lotus-eyed; obeisance to Thee! Thou art Jagaddhātrī, the upholdress of the Universe, I bow down to Thee; Thou art Maheśvarī, Mahā-Devī, and Mahāmaṅgalarūpinī, the great Devī Who dost great good to all. Thou destroyest the sins, Thou givest *mokṣa* or final liberation. Thou art Parameśvarī, Thou art the World Mother and Thou art of the nature of the Highest Brahman. Thou art Madadātrī, the giver of *mada*, the supreme felicity and rapture or excessive delight, Thou art maddened with *mada* (excessive joy); Thou canst be reached when Thou art given proper veneration; Thou art the Most High. Thou art Intelligent; Thou art meditated upon by the Munis; and Thou dwellest in the Sun. Thou art the Lord of the several *lokas* (worlds); Thou art endowed with the highest

knowledge; and Thou art of the color of water at the time of *pralaya,* the Universal Dissolution. Thou art worshipped by the Gods and Asuras for the destruction of the great *moha*. So great victory to Thee! Thou art the rescuer of one from the abode of death; Thou art worshipped by Yama, Thou art the elder of Yama, Thou art the controller of Yama and Thou art worshipped by all. Obeisance to Thee! Thou art impartial; Thou controllest all; Thou art perfectly unattached; Thou destroyest people's worldly attachments; Thou art the one to whom all look for the fructification of their desires; and Thou art compassion incarnate. Thou art worshipped by the names: Kankāla Krūra, Kāmāksī, Mīnaksī, Marma-bhedinī, Mādhūryarūpaśālinī; and Thou art worshipped with the *praṇava* Āūṁ̐ prefixed to all the *stotras* and *mantras*. Thou art of the nature of the *māyā-bīja, hṛīṁ*; Thou canst be realized by repeating the *mantra* and Thou canst be pleased by the deep concentration (*nididyāsana*) on Thee. Thou canst be reached by all men through their minds and Thou dost things that are pleasing to Mahādeva. Thou dwellest in the trees Aśvattha, Vata (Peepul tree), Neem, Mango, Kapittha (woodapple tree), and the *trikul* (Jujube) trees. Thou art the Palms (Jack) tree, Thou art Arka, Karīra and Ksīra trees. Thou residest in *dugdha-vallī* (the milky juice of plants); Thou art compassion incarnate; and fit to show mercy. Thou art sincerity and kindness and Thou art the Consort of the Omniscient Śiva. So victory to Thee!'

O Nārada! After the worship, if one performs the above *stotra* to the Devī, the worshipper derives all sorts of *puñyam* (merits). He who reads daily this *stotra*, pleasing to the Devī, becomes freed of all sorts of diseases, pain and freed of his fear of passions, so hard to conquer! What more than this that he who wants money, gets money; who wants *dharma*, gets *dharma*; he who wants *kāma*, gets his *kāma* (objects of desires); and he who wants *mokṣa*, gets *mokṣa*. Devī is the awarder of the *catur-varga* (fourfold fruits).

If this *stotra* be read, the Brāhmaṇa becomes *vedavit*, the knower of the *Vedas*; the Kṣatriya gets victory; the Vaiśya gets wealth and the Śūdra gets happiness. If this *stotra* be read with devotion and attention, the Pitṛs get

undying satisfaction lasting until *pralaya* (the time of universal dissolution). Thus I have described to you the method of worshipping the Devī. The Devas consider it with great attention. He gets the Devī-loka, who performs the worship of the Devī as above described, with devotion. O Brāhmaṇa! When the Devī is thus worshipped, all desires are fulfilled; all sins are destroyed; and in the end, one's mind becomes pure, and the worshipper is respected and worshipped everywhere. O son of Brahmā! His fear of going into hell is destroyed by the Grace of the Devī; even in dreams, he does not fear anything. By the Grace of Mahā-Māyā, his sons and his grandsons, riches and grains multiply and multiply. He becomes a great and steadfast devotee of the Devī; there is no doubt about this.

Now I have described to you completely the rules of worship of the Devī. When one performs this, one becomes freed of the *narakas;* and all sorts of good things come to him. O Muni! The *madhūka* worship and the monthly worship have been described also. He who performs this *madhūka* worship fully, never meets with any disease or obstacles.

Now I will describe to you the other five aspects of the Great Devī of the nature of Prakṛti. Her name, form and origin give pleasure to all the worlds. O Muni! Now hear this *prakṛti-pañchaka*, its narrative and the greatness thereof. Know that this is interesting, as it gives liberation."

Here ends the Twenty-fourth Chapter of the Eighth Skandha on the worship of the Devī in the Mahā Purāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of 18,000 ślokas, by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa. The Eighth Skandha completed.

Ninth Skandha

Chapter I—Description of Prakṛti

1. Śrī Nārāyaṇa said: "This highest Prakṛti is recognized as five-fold. When She is engaged in the work of creation, She appears as: (1) Durgā, the Mother of Gaṇeśa, (2) Rādhā, (3) Lakṣmī, (4) Sarasvatī and (5) Sāvitrī."

2-3. Nārada replied: "O Thou, the best of Jñānins! Who is this Prakṛti? Is She of the nature of conscious intelligence, or matter? Why did She maṇifest Herself, and then again why did She reveal Herself in these five forms? And what are Her characteristics? Now Thou oughtest to describe the lives of all five, the different modes of Their worship, and the fruits that are accrued thereby. Please also inform me which forms maṇifested themselves in which different places. Dost Thou please narrate to me all these."

4-18. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Child! Who is there in this world that can describe fully the characteristics of Prakṛti? However I will describe to you that much which I heard from my own father, Dharma. Hear.

The prefix *pra* in the word *prakṛti* means exalted, superior, excellent; and the affix *kriti* denotes creation. So the Goddess, the Devī Who is the most excellent in the work of creation is known as Devī Prakṛti. To come closer: *pra* signifies the *sattva-guṇa*, the most exalted quality; *kri* denotes the *rajo-guṇa* and *ti* denotes the *tamo-guṇa*. *Sattva-guṇa* is considered the highest as it is perfectly clear and free from any impurities whatsoever. *Rajo-guṇa* is considered intermediate as it has this defect: it spreads a veil over the reality of things, so as not to allow men to understand the true Reality; while the *tamo-guṇa* is considered worst as it completely hides real knowledge.

So when this intelligence of the nature of Brahman, beyond the three *guṇas*, gets tinged with the above three *guṇas* and becomes omnipotent, then She

is superior (*pradhānā*) in the work of creation. Hence She is styled as Prakṛti.

O child Nārada! The state just preceding that of creation is denoted by *pra*; and *kri* signifies creation. So the great Devī Who exists before creation is called Prakṛti after creation. The Paramātmā divided Himself into two parts by His *yoga* Māyā-Śakti: the right side was male and the left side was the female Prakṛti.

So the Prakṛti is of the nature of Brahman. She is eternal. As fire and its burning power are nondifferent, so there is no separation or distinction between *ātman* and His Śakti, between Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Therefore those that are foremost and the highest of the *yogīs* do not recognize any difference between male and a female. All is Brahman. Brahman is everywhere as male and female forever. There is nothing in this world that can exist for a moment even without this Brahman consisting of male and female. Out of the will of Śrī Śiva, Whose will is all in all, to create the world, came out at once the Mūla-Prakṛti, the Great Devī Īśvarī, Brahman with Māyā in a state of equilibrium. By Her command came out Her five forms, either for the purpose of creation or for bestowing favor and grace to the *bhaktas*.

Durgā the Mother of Gaṇeśa comes as the first and most auspicious, beloved by Śiva. She is Nārāyaṇī, Viṣṇu-Māyā, and of the nature of *pūrṇa-brahma,* the Supreme Brahman. This eternal, all-auspicious Devī is the presiding Deity of all the Devas, and is therefore worshipped and praised by Brahmā and the other Devas, Munis and Manus. This Bhagavatī Durgā-Devī, when She gets pleased, destroys all the sorrows, pains and troubles of the *bhaktas* that have taken Her refuge, and gives them *dharma*, everlasting name and fame, all auspicious things, bliss and all happiness—nay, even final liberation! She is the greatest refuge of the *bhaktas* that come to Her wholly for protection and are in great distress, whom She saves from all their dangers and calamities. In fact, know this Durgā-Devī as verily the presiding Deity of the heart of Śiva and as His highest Śakti, of the nature of the Holy Fire and the Holy Light. She is omnipotent and resides always

with Śiva, the Great God. She is worshipped by all the *siddha-puruṣas,* those who have attained success; the *siddhas* all go to Her, and when pleased She gives whatever *siddhis* Her *bhaktas* want.

19-40. This great Devī is intelligence, sleep, hunger, thirst, shadow, drowsiness, fatigue, kindness, memory, caste, forbearance, errors, peace, beauty and consciousness; contentment, nourishment, prosperity and fortitude. She is sung in the *Vedas* and in other *śāstras* as Mahā-Māyā, of the nature of the Universe. In reality, She is the all-Śakti of the Universe and She is the Śakti of Śiva. All these qualities are also mentioned in the *Vedas*. What is mentioned here is a tithe merely, in comparison to that of the *Vedas*. She has infinite qualities. Now hear of other Śaktis.

The second Śakti of the Paramātman is named Padmā or Lakṣmī. She is of the nature of *śuddha-sattva,* more pure than *sattva-guṇa*, and is Kṛṣṇa's presiding Deity of all wealth and prosperity. This very beautiful Lakṣmī-Devī is the complete master of the senses; She is of a very peaceful temper, of good mood and all-auspicious. She is free from greed, delusion, lust, anger, vanity and egotism. She is devoted to Her husband to Her *bhaktas;* Her words are very sweet and She is very dear to Her husband—indeed His life and soul. This Devī is residing in all the grains and vegetables and so She is the source of life of all beings. She resides in Vaikuṇṭha as Mahā-Lakṣmī, chaste and always in the service of Her husband. She is the heavenly Lakṣmī residing in the Heavens, the royal Lakṣmī in palaces, and the *gṛha*-Lakṣmī in the families of householders. O Nārada! All the lovely beauty that you see in all the living beings and all the things of the world, is She; She is the glory and fame of those that have done good and pious works, and it is She that is the prowess of the powerful kings. She is the trade of merchants, the mercy of the saints, engaged in doing good to others, and the seed of dissensions in those sinful and vicious persons disapproved of in the *Vedas*. She is worshipped by all, revered by all.

Now I will describe to you about the third Śakti of the Paramātman, who is the presiding Deity of knowledge, speech, intelligence, and learning. This third Śakti is named Sarasvatī. She is all the learning of this endless

Universe and She resides as *medhā* (intelligence) in the hearts of all the human beings; She is the power of composing poetry; She is memory and She is the great wit, light, splendor and inventive genius. She gives the power to understand the real meaning of the various difficult *siddhānta* works; She explains and makes us understand the difficult passages, and She is the remover of all doubts and difficulties. She acts when we write *Skandhas*, when we argue and judge, when we sing songs and play music; She is the time or measure in music; She holds balance and union in vocal and instrumental music. She is the Goddess of speech; She is the presiding Deity of the knowledge of various subjects in argumentations and disputations. In fact all the beings earn their livelihood by taking recourse to Her. She is peaceful and holds in Her hands a *vīnā* and *Skandhas*. Her nature is purely *sāttvik* (*śuddha-sattva*), modest and very loving to Śrī Hari. Her color is white like ice-clad mountains, like that of the white sandalwood, like that of the Kuṇḍa flower, like that of the Moon, or white lotus. She always repeats the name of Paramātmā Śrī Kṛṣṇa while She turns Her *mālā* composed of jewels. Her nature is ascetic; She is the bestower of the fruits of the ascetism of the ascetics; She is the *siddhi* and *vidyā* of all; She grants always success to all. Were She not here, the whole host of Brāhmaṇas would always remain speechless like the dead cluster of persons. What is recited in the *Vedas* as the third Devī is the Holy Word, the third Śakti, Sarasvatī. Thus I have described Her.

Now hear the glories of the other Devī in accordance with the *Vedas*. She is the mother of the four colors (castes), the origin of the six *Vedāṅgas,* the limbs of the *Vedas* and all the *chhandas*, the seed of all the *mantrams* of *sandhyā-vandanā* and the root, the *bīja* (seed) of the *Tantras;* She Herself is versed in all the subjects. Herself an ascetic, She is the *tapas* of the Brāhmaṇas; She is the *tejas* (fire) and the Brāhmaṇa caste, and embodies in Herself all sorts of *saṁskāras* (tendencies or inclinations); She is *japam*. Pure, known by the names of Sāvitrī and Gāyatrī, She resides always in the Brahma-loka (the sphere of Brahman); all the sacred places of pilgrimage want Her touch for their purification.

41-47. Her color is perfectly white like the pure crystal. She is purely *śuddha-sattva*, of the nature of the highest bliss; She is eternal and superior to all. She is of the nature of Parabrahman and is the bestower of *mokṣa*. She is the fiery Śakti and the presiding Deity of the *brahma-teja:* the fiery spirit of Brahmā and the Brāhmaṇas. The whole world is purified by the touch of Her feet. This Sāvitrī Devī is the fourth Śakti.

O child Nārada! Now I will describe to you about the fifth Śakti, the Devī Rādhikā. Hear. She is the Presiding Deity of the five *prāṇas;* She Herself is the life of all; dearer than life even to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; and She is highly more beautiful and superior to all the other Prakṛti Devīs. She dwells in everything; She is very proud of Her good fortune (*saubhāgyam*); Her glory is infinite. She is the wife, the left body, as it were, of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and She is not in any way inferior to Him, either in quality or in the *tejas* (fiery spirit) or in any other thing. She is higher than the highest; the essence of all, infinitely superior, the first of all, eternal, of the nature of the highest bliss, fortunate, highly respected and worshipped by all. She is, the presiding Devī of the *rāsa-līlā* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. From Her has sprung the *rāsa-maṇḍalam,* and She is the grace and the ornament of the *rāsa-maṇḍalam*.

[Note: Extracts from a paper on Creation as explained by Hon’ble Justice Sir G. Woodroffe.

The lecturer commenced by pointing out that an examination of any doctrine of creation reveals two fundamental concepts: Those of Being

(Kutastha) and Becoming (Bhava); Changelessness and Change; the one and Many. The Brahmān or Spirit in its own nature (Svarupa) is and never becomes. It is the evovīnās derived from the Principle of Becoming (Mūlā Prakṛti) which constitute what is called Nature. The latter principle is essentially Movement. The world is displayed by consciousness (cit) in association with Mūlā Prakṛti in cosmic vibration (spandana). Recent Western hypotheses have made scientific “matter” into Māyā in the sense that it is but the varied appearances produced in our mind by vibration of and in the single substance ether. The doctrine of vibration (Spandana) is

however in India an ancient inheritance. The whole world is born from the varied forms of the initial movement in Mūlā Prakṛti. The problem is how does such multiplicity exist without derogation to the essential unit of its efficient cause, the spirit? The lecturer then made a rapid survey of the Sānkhya philosophy on this point which assumes two real and independent principles of Being and Becoming which it calls Puruṣa and Prakṛti and passed from this the easiest dualistic answer to the pure monism of Śaṅkara which asserted that there was but one Principle of Being, the Sadvastu and Māyā, whether

considered as a Śakti of Īśvara or as the product of such Śakti was Avastu or nothing. He then pointed out that the Tāntrik doctrine with which he dealt occupied a middle position between those two points of view. Śiva in the Kulārnava Tantra says "Some desire Monism" (Advaitavāda), others Dualism (Dvaitavāda). Such, however, know not My Truth which is neither Monism nor Dualism (Dvaitādvaitā Vivarjita). Tantra is not Dvaitavāda for it does not recognize Prakṛti as an independent unconscious principle (Acit). It differs from Śaṅkara's Advaitavāda in holding that Prakṛti as a conscious principle of Becoming, that is as Śakti, is not Avastu, though its displayed picture, the world is Māyā. It effects a synthesis of the śānkhya dualism by the conversion of the twin principles of Puruṣa and Prakṛti into the unity which is the ArdhanārĪśvara Śiva Śakti.

As regards other matters it adopts the notions of the Sānkhya such as the concepts of Mūlā Prakṛti with the three Guṇas, vibration (spandana), evolution (Parināma) of the Vikritis and the order of emanation of the Tattvas. Śakti which effects this exists and is Herself never unconscious (Acit) though It has the power to make the Jīva think It is such. If this were understood one would not hear such nonsense as that the śāktas (whose religion is one of the oldest in the world) worship material force or gross matter (Jada).

The lecturer then shortly explained the nature of Śakti (Śakti Tattva), a term which derived from the root "śak" meant the Divine Power whereby the world was created, maṇifested and destroyed. In Tantra the power and the

Lord who wields it (Śaktimān) are one and the same, Śiva and Śakti are one and the same, Śiva is Brahmān, Śakti is Brahmān. The first is the transcendent, the second the immanent aspect of the one Brahmān, Who is both Śiva and Śakti. The Mother creates (Kārya-Vibhāvinī). The Father wills what She does (Kārya- Vibhāvaka). From their union creation comes. Śakti is not like the diminutive female figure which is seen on the lap of some Indian images, to which is assigned the subordinate position which some persons consider a Hindu wife should occupy. She is not a handmaid of the Lord but the Lord Himself in Her aspect as Mother of the worlds. This Śakti is both Nirguṇa and Saguṇa that is Cit Śakti and Māyā Śakti.

After this defining the nature of Śakti by which the world was created, the lecturer commenced an account of its maṇifestation as the universe, following in the main the śāradā Tilaka written in the eleventh century by Laksmanāchārya, the guru of the celebrated Kashmiran Tāntrik, Abhinava Gupta. The following is a very abbreviated summary of this, the main portion of the paper. The lecturer first referred to the Aghanāvasthā state which was that Niskala Śiva and touching upon the question why Śiva became Sakala (associated with Kalā) and creative explained the term Kalā and theory of Adristasristi taught by the Tantra as by other śastras. The former is according to Sānkhya, Mūlā Prakṛti; according to Vedānta, Avidyā and according to the Śiva Tantra, Śakti. The latter is the doctrine that the impulse to creation is proximately caused by the Karma of the Jīvas. It is the seed of Karma which contains the germ of cosmic will to life. When Karma becomes ripe, there arises the state called īksana and other names indicative of creative desire and will. There then takes place a development which is peculiar to the Tantra called Sadriśa Parināma, which is a kind of Vivartta. The development is only apparent for there is no real change in the ānandamaya Kosa. Śakti which exists in Sakala Śiva in a purely potential state is said to issue from Him. This is the first kinetic aspect of Śakti in which Sattaguṇa is displayed. This is the Paramākāsāvasthā. Nāda (sound, word) then appears. Śakti becomes further kinetic through the enlivening of the Rajo Guṇa. This is the Aksarāvasthā. Then under the influence of Tamas, īsvara becomes

Ghanibhūta and what is called the Parāvindu. This is the Avyaktāvasthā. Thus the Supreme Vindu men call

by different names, Mahā Viṣṇu, Brahmā Purūsa, or Devī. It is compared to a grain of gram which under its sheath contains two seeds in undivided union. These are Śiva Śakti and their encircling sheath is Māyā. This Vindu unfolds and displays itself, in the threefold aspect of Vindu, Vīja, Nāda; or Śiva, Śakti, and Śiva Śakti; the three Śaktis of will, knowledge and action. This is the mysterious Kāma Kalā which is the root of all Mantras. These seven: Sakala, Śiva, Śakti, Nāda, Parāvindu, Vindu, Vīja, Nāda are all aspects of Śakti which are the seven divisions of the Mantra Āūṁ and constitute what is called the creation of Parā sound in the Īśvara creation.

The lecturer having explained the nature of these Śaktis which formed part of the sound (śabda), Sadrisa Parināma, referred to the form or meaning (Artha) creation in the same development by the appearance of the six Śivas from śambu to Brahmā which were aggregate (Samasti) sound powers. It was he said, on the differentiation of the Parāvindu that there existed the completed causal śabda which is the Hidden Word. The causal body or Parā śabda and Artha being complete, there then appeared the displayed word or śabdārtha. This is a composite like the Greek Logos. The śabda Brahmān or Brahmān as cause of śabda is the Chaitanya in all beings. The śabdārtha in the Vedantin Nāmarūpa or world of name and form of this śabdārtha the subtle and gross bodies are constituted, the Śaktis of which are the Hiraṇyagarbha sound, called Madhyamā and the Virāt sound Vaikhārī. By śabda is not meant merely physical sound which as a quality of atomic ether is evolved from Tāmasik Ahaṅkāra.

The lecturer then pointed out that there had been Adrista Sristi up to the appearance of Śakti and Vivartta development up to the completion of the "word" or causal sound. Then there takes place real evolution (Parināma) in which the Tattvas (or elements discovered as a result of psychological analysis of our worldly experience) are said to emanate according to the Sānkhya and not the Vedantic scheme, though there were some peculiarities in the Tantrik exposition which the lecturer noted. Finally

Yogīka Sristi was accepted in so far as it was the elements which in varied combinations made up the gross world.

In conclusion the lecturer pointed out that Indian śāstra was a mutually connected whole. Such peculiarities as existed in any particular śāstra were due to a variety of standpoints or purpose in view. The main point in this connection to be remembered was that the Tantra was practical śādhanā śāstra. Whilst Śaṅkara dealt with the subject from the standpoint of Jñāṇakānda, the Tantra treated it from the point of view of worship (Upāsanākānda) the Tantrik doctrine is compounded of various elements some of which it shared with other śāstras, some of which are its own, the whole being set forth according to a method and terminology which is peculiar to itself.]

48-70. She is the Lady of the *rāsa-līlā*, the foremost of the jovial, humorous, witty persons and dwells always in *rāsa*. Her abode is in Goloka and from Her have come out all the *gopīkās.* Her nature is the highest bliss, the highest contentment, and excessive joy; She transcends the three *guṇas* and is *nirākāra,* without any particular form; She dwells everywhere but remains unconnected with any. She is the soul of all. She is without any effort to do anything and devoid of *ahaṅkāra*. She assumes forms only to show Her favor to Her *bhaktas*. The intelligent learned Paṇḍitas read Her *Mahimā* (glories) in meditating on Her according to the *Vedas*. The chief of the Devas and the Munis could never see Her; Her clothing is fireproof and She is decorated with many ornaments all over Her body. Her body looks as if the crores of moons have risen all at once; She is the giver of *bhakti* (devotion) towards Kṛṣṇa, service towards Kṛṣṇa; and She bestows all wealth and prosperity. In *varāha-kalpa*, when the Varāha incarnation took place, She incarnated Herself as the daughter of one *gopa* (cowherd), named Vṛṣabhānu. And Earth was blessed by the touch of Her feet. She is such as Brahmā and the other Devas could never perceive Her by any of their senses, yet everyone at Vṛṇdāvana saw Her very easily. She is the gem amongst women. And when She is seen on the breast of Kṛṣṇa, it seems that lightning flashes in the blue mass of clouds in the sky. In days gone by,

Brahmā practiced austerities for sixty thousand years to purify Himself to see the nails of Her toe; but far from seeing that, He could not have that even in his dreams. At last He succeeded in seeing Her at Vṛṇdāvana and became blessed. O child Nārada! This is the fifth Prakṛti and She is denominated as Rādhā. Every female in every Universe is sprung from a part of Śrī Rādhā or part of a part.

O Nārada! Thus I have described to you the five highest Prakṛtis, Durgā and others. Now I am going to describe those that are parts of these Prakṛtis. Hear.

The Ganges (Gaṅgā) has sprung from the lotus feet of Viṣṇu; Her form is fluidic; She is eternal. And She is a veritable fire to burn away the sins of sinners. She is sweet to touch in taking baths and in drinking; She gives final liberation to the *jīvas*, and leads easily to the Goloka abode. She is the holiest amongst the places of pilgrimage and the first of the running rivers. She is the rows of pearls in the clotted hairs of Mahādeva's head and She is the *tapasyā* (asceticism) incarnate of the *tapasvīs* (ascetics) of Bhāratavarṣa. This Ganges purifies the three worlds and is the part of Mūlā-Prakṛti; She shines like the full Moon, is white like white lotus and like milk; She is pure *śuddha-sattva*, clear, free from any *ahaṅkāra*, chaste and beloved of Nārāyaṇa.

Tulasī Devī is the consort of Viṣṇu. She is the ornament of Nārāyaṇa, and dwells always at the lotus feet of Nārāyaṇa. By Her are performed all the acts of worship, all austerities, and all *saṅkalpas* (resolves). She is the chief of all the flowers, holy and able to give merits (*puñyam*) to others. At Her sight and touch, *nirvāṇa* can be obtained; and were it not for Her, there could be no other fire to burn the sins of this Kali-yuga. She Herself is of the nature of fire, and at the touch of Whose lotus feet, the earth is purified; all the *tīrthas* desire to have Her sight and touch for purification, and without Her all acts in this world become fruitless. She bestows *mokṣa* (liberation) to those who want final liberation, grants all sorts of desires to people. She Herself is like a *kalpa-vṛkṣa*, Who is the presiding Deity of all the trees in Bhārata, Who has come here to grant satisfaction to the ladies of

Bhāratavarṣa, and She is considered very superior throughout all parts of India. This Tulasī-Devī is the chief factor of Mūlā-Prakṛti.

71-95. Then comes the Manasā-Devī, the daughter of Kaśyapa. She is the dear disciple of Śaṅkara and is therefore very learned in matters of *śāstras*. She is the daughter of Ananta-Deva, the Lord of Snakes and is very much respected by all the Nāgas. She Herself is very beautiful, the Lady of the Nāgas, the mother of the Nāgas and is carried by them. She is decorated with ornaments of the Snakes; She is respected by the Nāgendras and She sleeps on the bed of Snakes. She is Siddha-Yogīnī, the devotee of Viṣṇu and always ready in the worship of Viṣṇu; She is the *tapas* and the bestower of the fruits of *tapas*. Herself an ascetic, She spent three *lakh* years according to the Deva measure in *sādhana* and has become the foremost of the ascetics in Bhāratvarṣa. She is the presiding Deity of all *mantras;* Her whole body shines with *brahma-teja,* the holy fire of Brahman. Herself of the nature of Brahman, She again meditates on Brahman. She is sprung from a part of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the chaste wife of Jarat Kāru Muni, the mother of Āstika, the great Muni; She is the part of Mūlā-Prakṛti.

O child Nārada! Now comes the Śasthī-Devī, the Mother of Devasenā. She is the most superior amongst the Gaurī and the sixteen Mātṛkās. This chaste woman is the giver of sons and grandsons in the three worlds and the nurse, the foster mother of all. She is the sixth part of Mūlā-Prakṛti and is hence known by the name of Śasthī. She lives near to every child as an aged *yogīnī*. Her worship is everywhere prevalent in the twelve months Vaiśākha, etc. When the child gets born, on the sixth day Her worship is done in the lying-in chamber and again on the 21st day, the most auspicious worshipful ceremony of Her is performed. The Munis bow down to Her with reverence and want to visit Her daily. She protects all children always with a mother's affectionate heart. This Śasthī Devī is again the part of Mūlā-Prakṛti.

Then appears the Devī Maṅgala Caṇḍikā. She goes from one house to another, on land or through water or in air, doing great good to them; She has come out of the face of Prakṛti-Devī and is doing always all sorts of

good to this world. Her name is Maṅgala Caṇḍī because She is all-auspicious at the time of creation, and assumes very furious angry appearance at the time of destruction. So the *paṇḍitas* say. On every Tuesday in all the worlds Her worship is done; and when pleased, She gives to women sons, grandsons, wealth, prosperity, fame, good of all sorts and grants all desires. This Maṅgala Caṇḍī is again the part of Mūlā-Prakṛti.

Now comes the lotus-eyed Māheśvarī Kālī, who when angry can destroy all this universe in a moment, who sprang from the forehead of Mūlā-Prakṛti, Dūrgā to slay the two demons Śumbha and Niśumbha. She is the half-portion of Dūrgā and qualified like Her, fiery and energetic. The beauty and splendor of Her body make one think as if millions of suns have arisen simultaneously. She Who is the foremost of all the Śaktis and is more powerful than any of them, Who grants success to all persons, Who is superior to all and is of *yogik* nature, Who is exceedingly devoted to Kṛṣṇa and like Him fiery, well-qualified, and valorous, Whose body has become black by the constant meditation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who can destroy in one breath this whole *brahmāṇḍa*, Who was engaged in fighting with the Daityas simply for sport and instruction to the people and Who when pleased in worship, can grant the four fruits *dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa*. This Kālī is also the part of Prakṛti.

The Devī Basundharā (Earth) is again the part of Mūlā-Prakṛti. Brahmā and the other Devas, all the *muni-maṇḍalams* (the spheres of Munis), fourteen Manus and all men sing hymns to Her. She is the support of all and filled with all sorts of grains. She is the source of all gems and jewels, She bears in Her womb all the precious metals. All sorts of best things issue from Her. She is the refuge of all. The subjects and kings worship Her always and chant hymns to Her. All the *jīvas* live through Her, and She bestows all sorts of wealth and prosperity. Without Her, all this, moving or non-moving, would become void of any substratum.

96-143. O child Nārada! Now hear about them who are issued again from the parts of Mūlā-Prakṛti as well as the names of their wives. I will now

narrate duly. The Devī Svāhā is the wife of Agṇi (fire), and the whole Universe worships Her. Without her, the Devī can never take any oblations. Dakśiṇā and Diksā are both the wives of Yajña (sacrifice). They are honored everywhere. So much so that without *dakśiṇā* (the fees given at the end of the sacrifice) no sacrificial ceremonies can be complete and fructifying. The Devī Svadhā is the wife of the Pitṛs. All worship this Devī Svadhā whether they are Munis, Manus, or men. If this *mantra* Svadhā be not uttered while making an offering to the Pitṛs, all turn out useless. The Devī Svasti is the wife of the Vāyu Deva; She is honored everywhere in the Universe. Without this Svasti Devī, no giving nor taking nor any action can be fructifying and useful. Puṣṭī (nourishment) is the wife of Gaṇapati. All in this world worship this Puṣṭī Devī. Without this Puṣṭī, women or men alike all become weaker and weaker. Tuṣṭī (satisfaction, contentment) is the wife of Ananta Deva. She is praised and worshipped everywhere in this world. Without Her no one anywhere in the world can be happy. Sampattī is the wife of Īśana Deva. The Suras, the men all alike worship Her. Were it not for Her, all in this world would be oppressed with dire poverty. The Devī Dhṛtī is the wife of Kapila Deva. She is honored equally in all places. Were it not for Her, all the people in this world would have become impatient. Satī Devī is the wife of Satya Deva (truth). She is endearing to the whole world. The liberated ones worship Her always. Were it not for the truth-loving Satī, the whole world would have lost the treasure of friendship. Dayā (mercy) endearing to the whole world, is the chaste wife of Mohā Deva. She is liked by all. Were it not for Her, all the world would have become hopeless. The Devī Pratiṣṭhā (fame, celebrity) is the wife of Punya Deva (merit). She gives merits to persons according as they worship Her. Were it not for Her, all the persons would remain dead while living. The Devī Kīrti (fame) is the wife of Sukarma (good works). Herself a Siddha (one who has acquired the result of one's success), all the blessed people honor Her with great reverence. Were it not for Her, all the persons in this world would have been dead, devoid of any fame. Kriyā (work-efforts, action, doing) is the wife of Udyoga (enthusiasm). All honor Her greatly. O Muni Nārāda! Were it not for Her, all people would be void of any rules and regulations.

Falsehood is the wife of Adharma (unrighteousness). She is honored greatly by all the cheats that are extant in this world. Were she not liked by them, then all the cheats would become extinct. She did not fall in the sight of anybody in the Satya-yuga. Her subtle form became visible in the Tretā Yuga. When the Dvāpara-yuga came, She became half developed. And at last when Kali-yuga has come, She is fully developed, and there is no second to Her whether in bold confidence and shamelessness or in talking much and pervading everywhere. With her brother Deceitfulness, She roams from one house to another. Peace, Modesty and Shame are the wives of good behavior. Were they not existent, all in this world would have turned out deluded and mad. Intelligence, Genius and Fortitude, these three are the wives of Jñāṇa (knowledge). Had they not lived, every one would become stupid and insane. Mūrti is the wife of Dharma Deva. She is of the nature of bbeauty to all and very charming. Were it not for Her, Paramātmān would not get any resting place; and the whole universe would have become *nirālamba* (without anyplace to rest). This chaste Mūrti Devī is of the nature of splendor, loveliness and Lakṣmī. She is everywhere respected, worshipped and reverenced. Sleep, the Siddha Yogīnī, is the wife of Rudra Deva, who is of the nature of *kālāgni* (the universal conflagration at the breakup of the world). All the *jīvas* spend their nights with Her. The twilights, night and day are the wives of Kāla (time). If they were not, even the Creator would not be able to reckon time. Hunger and thirst are the wives of Lobha (covetousness). They are thanked, respected and worshipped by the whole world. Had they not lived, the whole world would have merged in an ocean of anxieties. Splendor and burning capacity are the wives of Tejas (fire). Without these, the Lord of the world could never have created and established order in this universe. Death and old age are the daughters of Kāla, and the dear wives of Jvarā (disease). Without these, all the creation would come to an end. Tandrā (drowsiness, lassitude) and Prīti (satisfaction) are the daughters of Nidrā (sleep). And they are the dear wives of Sukha (pleasure). They are present everywhere in this world.

O best of Munis! Śraddhā (faith) and Bhakti (devotion) are the wives of Vairāgyam (dispassion). For then all the persons can become liberated while living (*jīvanmuktas*). Besides these there is Aditi, the Mother of the Gods, Surabhi, mother of cows; Diti, the mother of the Daityas; Kadru, the mother of the Nāgas (serpents); Vinatā, the mother of Garuḍa, the prince of birds; and Danu, the mother of the Dānavas. All are very useful for the purpose of creation. But these all are parts of Mūlā-Prakṛti.

Now I will mention some of the other parts of Prakṛti. Hear. Rohinī, the wife of the Moon, Sanjñā, the wife of the Sun; Śatarūpā, the wife of Manu; Śachī, the wife of Indra; Tārā, the wife of Bṛhaspati; Arundhatī, the wife of Vasiṣṭha; Anasūyā, the wife of Atri; Devahūtī, the wife of Kardama; Prasūti, the wife of Dakṣa; Menakā, the mind-born daughter of the Pitṛs and the mother of Ambikā, Lopāmudrā, Kuntī, the wife of Kuvera, the wife of Varuṇa, Bindhyāvalī, the wife of the King Bali; Damayantī, Yaśodā, Devakī, Gāndhārī, Draupadī, Śaivyā, Satyavatī, the chaste and noble wife of Vṛṣabhānu and the mother of Rādhā; Mandidarī; Kauśalyā, Kauravī, Subhadrā, Revatī, Satyabhāmā, Kālindī, Laksmanā; Jāmbavatī; Nāgnajiti, Mitrabindā, Laksanā, Rukminī, Sītā, the Lakṣmī incarnate; Kālī, Yojana Gandhā, the chaste mother of Vyāsa, Ūṣā, the daughter of Vāna, her companion Citralekhā; Prabhāvati, Bhānumatī, the Satī Māyāvatī, Renukā, the mother of Paraśurāma; Rohinī, the mother of Balarāma, Ekanandā and the sister of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Satī Durgā and many other ladies are the parts of Prakṛti.

All the female sex, everywhere in the Universe all come from the parts of Prakṛti. So to insult any woman is to insult Prakṛti. If one worships a chaste Brāhmaṇa woman who has her husband and son living, with clothing, ornaments, sandalwood paste, etc., one worships, as it were, Prakṛti. If any Vipra worships a virgin girl eight years old, with clothing, ornaments and sandalwood paste, know that he has worshipped the Prakṛti Devī. The best, middling, and worst are all sprung from Prakṛti. Those women that are sprung from *sattva-guṇa* are all very good-natured and chaste; those that are sprung from *rajo-guṇa* are middling, very much attached to

worldly enjoyments and do their selfish ends. And those that are sprung from *tamo-guṇa* are recognized as worst and belonging to unknown families. They are very scurrilous, cheats, ruining their families, fond of their own free ways, quarrelsome and no seconds are found equal to them. Such women become prostitutes in this world and Apsarās in Heaven. The hermaphrodites are also parts of Prakṛti but they are of the nature of *tamo-guṇa*.

144-159. Thus I have described to you the nature of Prakṛti. So in this *punya-bhūmi* Bhāratavarṣa, to worship the Devī is by all means desirable. In days past by, King Suratha worshipped Mūlā-Prakṛti Durgā, the Destructrix of all evils. Then again Śrī Rāmacandra worshipped Her when he wanted to kill Rāvana. Since then Her worship is extant in the three worlds. She was first born as the honorable daughter of Dakṣa. She destroyed the whole host of Daityas and Dānavas. It was She who, hearing the abusive words uttered against Her husband at the *yajña* by Dakṣa, Her father, gave up Her body and took up again Her birth. She took Her birth in the womb of Menakā and got again Paśupati as Her husband. And of the two sons, Kārtika and Gaṇeśa, born to Her, Kārtika was the Ansa (part) of Nārāyaṇa and Ganapati was Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, the Lord of Rādhā. O Devaṛṣi! After the two sons, Lakṣmī Devī came out of Durgā. Maṅgala Rāja, the King Mars first worshipped Her. Since then, all in the three worlds began to worship Her, whether they are Devas or men. The King Aśvapati first worshipped Sāvitrī Devī; and since then the Devas, Munis, all began to worship Her. When the Devī Saravastī was born, Bhagavān Brahmā first worshipped Her; next the greatest Munis, Devas all began to worship Her.

On the full moon night of the month of Kārtik, it was Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the highest spirit, Who worshipped, first of all, the Devī Rādhā within the *rāsa-maṇḍalam*, the enclosure within which the *rāsa-līlā* was performed in Goloka. Then under the command of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, all the *gopas* (cowherds), *gopīs*, all the boys, girls, Surabhī, the queen of the race of the cows, and the other cows worshipped Her. So since Her worship by the inhabitants of Goloka, by Brahmā and the other Devas and the Munis, all began to

worship ever Śrī Rādhā with devotion and incense, lamps and various other offerings. On earth She was first worshipped by Suyajña in the sacred field of Bhāratvarṣa, under the direction of Bhagavān Mahādeva. Subsequently, under the command of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the highest spirit, the inhabitants of the three worlds began to worship Her. The Munis, with incense, flowers and various other offerings worship always the Devī Rādhā with great devotion. O child Nārada! Besides these, all the other Devīs that have issued from Prakṛti Devī are all worshipped. So much so that in the villages, the village Deities, in the forests, the forest Deities and in the cities, the city Deities are worshipped. Thus I have described to you all according to the *śāstras* the glorious lives of the Devī Prakṛti and Her parts. What more do you want to hear?"

Here ends the First Chapter on the Description of Prakṛti in the Ninth Skandha of the Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter II—the Origin of Prakṛti and Puruṣa

1-4. Nārada said: "O Lord! I have heard all that You said in brief about Prakṛti Devī. Now describe in detail. Why was the Mūlā-Prakṛti Ādya-Śakti (the prime force) created at the beginning before the creation of this world of five elements? How did She, being of the nature of the three *guṇas*, come to be divided into five parts? I desire to hear all this in detail. Now kindly describe their auspicious births, methods of worship, their meditation, their *stotras* (praises), *kavacas* (mystic syllables considered as a protective armor), glory and power in detail."

5-26. Nārāyaṇa spoke: "O Devarṣi! The Mūlā-Prakṛti, of the nature of Māyā of ParaBrahman is an eternal entity (*nabho-maṇḍal*); time (*kāla*), the ten quarters, the Universal Egg, Goloka and lower than this, Vaikuṇṭha-Dhāma all are eternal things. *Ātman* and Prakṛti are in inseparable union with each other as fire and its burning capacity, the Moon and her beauty, the lotus and its splendor, the Sun and his rays are inseparably united with each other. As the goldsmith cannot prepare golden ornaments without gold,

and as the potter cannot make pots without earth, so the *ātman* cannot do any work without the help of this omnipotent Prakṛti. The letter *sa* indicates *aiśvaryam*—prosperity, the divine powers; and *kti*, denotes strength; and in as much as She is the bestower of the above two, the Mūlā-Prakṛti is named Śakti. *Bhaga* indicates knowledge, prosperity, wealth, fame; and in as much as Mūlā-Prakṛti has all these powers, She is also called Bhagavatī. And *ātman* is always in union with this Bhagavatī Who is all powers, so He is called Bhagavān. Bhagavān is therefore sometimes with form, and sometimes He is without form. When Prakṛti is latent, God is without form; with Prakṛti maṇifest, God is with form. The *yogīs* always think of the luminous form of the formless Bhagavān, and declare Him to be all-blissful Parabrahman, or God. Though He is invisible, the witness of all, omniscient, the cause of all, the giver of everything and of every form, yet the Vaiṣṇavas do not say so. The Vaiṣṇavas ask how can fire, strength and energy come when there is no fiery, strong, energetic person behind them? Therefore He who shines in the center of this fiery sphere is the Parabrahman; He is the fiery person; He is higher than the highest. He is all-will; He is all form, the cause of all causes and His form is very beautiful. He is youthful; He looks very peaceful and beloved by all. He is the highest; and His bluish body shines like new rainclouds. His two eyes defy the beauty of the autumn lotuses in the midday; His exquisitely nice rows of teeth put all the series of pearls in the dark back- ground. The peacock's feather is seen on His crown; the garland of Mālatī flowers is suspended from His neck.; His nose is exceedingly beautiful; the sweet smile is always seen on His lips. There is no second like Him in showing favor to the *bhaktas*. He wears yellow clothing, as if the burning fire is emanating all round; His long arms reach His knees. His body is decorated all over with jewels. He is the sole refuge of this universe; the Lord of all, omnipotent and omnipresent. No trace of deficiency can be seen in Him; He is Himself a *siddha* (perfect) *Puruṣa*, and the foremost of all *siddha-puruṣas;* He bestows *siddhis* to all. The Vaiṣṇavas meditate always on that eternal Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Deva of the Devas. He fully takes away all fears of birth, death, old age, ills and sorrows. The age of Brahmā is the twinkling of His eye. That highest Self, the Parabrahman is denominated as Kṛṣṇa.

The word *kṛṣ* denotes *bhakti* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the letter *ṇa* signifies devotion to His service. So He is the bestower of *bhakti* and devotion to His service. Again *kṛṣ* denotes all, everything; and *ṇa* signifies the root. So He who is the root and creator of all is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In the very beginning when He desired to create this universe, there was nothing then except Śrī Kṛṣṇa; and at last, impelled by *kāla* (His own creation), He became ready, in His part, to do the work of creation.

27-61. The Lord, who is all-will, willed and divided Himself into two parts, His Left part becoming female and His Right part becoming male. Then that eternal one, Who is greatly loving, looked at the female, His left part, the sole receptacle to hold all the contents of love, very lovely to the eyes, and looking like a beautiful lotus. The loins of this woman defy the Moon; Her thighs put the plaintain trees quite in the background; Her breasts are mistaken for beautiful *bel* fruits; flowers are scattered as Her Hairs on the head; Her middle part is very slender, very beautiful to behold! Exceedingly lovely, appearing very calm, with a sweet smile reigning in Her lips; making sidelong glances, Her clothing purified with fire; all over Her body decorated with gems. Her eyes, also, like the *cakora* bird (Greek partridge) began to drink incessantly with joy the moonbeams from the face of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, defying ten million of moons. On Her forehead there was the dot of vermillion (red-lead); over that, the dot of white sandalwood paste and over that was placed musk. The fillets or braids of hair on Her head are slightly curved; this was decorated with *mālatī* garlands; on Her neck was suspended a necklace of gems and jewels, and She is always very amorous towards Her husband. On looking at Her face, it seems that ten million moons have arisen at once; when She walks, Her gait puts (humiliates) those of ganders and elephants in the shade. O Muni! Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the *rāsa* dance, and the person of taste in the *rāsa* sport, looked askance at Her for a while; and then catching hold of Her by Her hand, went to the *rāsa-maṇḍalam* and began to play the *rāsa* sport (amorous pastimes). It seemed then the Lord of amorous pastimes had become incarnate there and had been enjoying the various pleasures of amorous passions and desires. So much, that Brahmā's one day passed away in that

sport. The father of the universe, then becoming tired, in an auspicious moment impregnated Her womb who was born of His left portion. Prakṛti Devī was also tired of the embraces of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; so after intercourse, she began to perspire and breathe quickly. Her perspiration turned into water and deluged the whole universe; and Her breath turned into air and became the life of all beings.

The female that sprung from the left side of Vāyu became his wife, and out of their contact originated the five sons Prāṇa, Apāna, Samāna, Udāna and Vyāna. These are the five vital Vāyus of all beings. Besides these, from the womb of Vāyu's wife came out Nāga and the other four lower Vāyus. The water that came out from perspiration, Varuṇa Deva became the presiding Deity of that; and the female sprung out of the left side of Varuṇa Deva, became the wife of Varuṇa, called Varuṇānī.

On the other hand, the Śakti of the nature of knowledge of Śrī Kṛṣṇa remained pregnant for one hundred *manvantaras*. Her body became effulgent with *brahma-teja* (the fire of Brahman). Kṛṣṇa was Her life, and She again was dearer to Kṛṣṇa than even His life. She remained always with Śrī Kṛṣṇa; so much so that She constantly rested on His breast. When one hundred *manvantaras* passed away, that beautiful one gave birth to a golden egg. That egg was the repository of the whole universe. The beloved of Kṛṣṇa became very sorry to see the egg and out of anger, threw it within the water collected in the center of the Universe. Seeing this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa raised a great cry, and immediately cursed Her duly, saying: "O angry one! O cruel one! When You have forsaken out of anger this son just born of you, I say then that You become from today bereft of any issue. Besides, let all those godly women that will spring out of Your parts also be deprived of having any issue or sons, and they will remain ever constant in their youth."

O Muni! While Śrī Kṛṣṇa was thus cursing, suddenly came out from the tongue of the beloved of Kṛṣṇa, a beautiful daughter of a white color. Her clothing was all white, in Her hands there were a *vīnā* and *skandha,* and all Her body was decorated with ornaments made of gems and jewels. She

was the presiding Deity of all the *śāstras*. Some time later the Mūla-Prakṛti, the Beloved of Kṛṣṇa divided into two parts. Out of Her left side came Kāmalā and out of Her right side came Rādhikā. In the meantime Śrī Kṛṣṇa divided Himself into two parts. From His right side appeared a two-handed form; and from the left side appeared a four-handed form. Then Śrī Kṛṣṇa addressed the Goddess of speech, holding a *vīnā* in Her hand, "O Devī! You follow this four-handed person as His wife," and then spoke to Rādhā: "O Rādhe! You are a sensitive, proud lady; let You be My wife; so it will do you good." Śrī Kṛṣṇa also told Lakṣmī gladly to become the wife of the four-handed Nārāyaṇa. Then Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of the world, took both Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī to the abode Vaikuṇṭha.

O Muni! Both Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī became issueless, being born of Rādhā. From the body of Nārāyaṇa arose His attendants, all four-handed. They were all equal to Him in appearance, in qualifications, in spirit and in age. On the other hand, from the body of Kāmalā arose millions of female attendants, all equal to Her in form and qualifications. Then arose innumerable *gopas* (cowherds) from the pores of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They were all equal to the Lord of Goloka in form, *guṇas*, power and age; they were all dear to Him as if they were His life.

62-88. From the pores of Rādhikā came out the *gopa-kanyās* (cow-herdesses). They were all equal to Rādhā, and all were Her attendants and were sweet-speaking. Their bodies were all decorated with ornaments of jewels, and their youth was constant, they were all issueless as Śrī Kṛṣṇa had cursed them thus.

O best of the Brāhmaṇas! On the other hand, suddenly arose Durgā, the *māyā* of Viṣṇu (the highest Self), eternal, whose Deity was Kṛṣṇa. Durgā was the *avatāra* of Mūla-Prakṛti, not of Rādhā as Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī were. She is Nārāyaṇī; She is Īśānī; She is the Śakti of all and She is the presiding Deity of the intelligence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. From Her have come out many other Devīs; She is Mūla-Prakṛti and She is Īśvarī; no failings or insufficiencies are seen in Her. She is the *tejas* of the nature of fire, and She is of the nature of the three *guṇas*. Her color is bright like molten gold; Her

luster looks as if ten millions of Suns have simultaneously arisen. She looks gracious always with sweet smile on Her lips; Her hands are a thousand (countless) in number. Various weapons are in all Her hands. The clothing of the three-eyed one are bright and purified by fire. She is decorated with ornaments all of jewels. All the women who are the jewels are sprung from Her parts, and parts of parts, and by the power of Her *māyā*, all the people of the world are enchanted. She bestows all the wealth that a householder wants; She bestows devotion towards Kṛṣṇa on Kṛṣṇa's devotees; nay, She is the Vaiṣṇavī-Śakti of the Vaiṣṇavas. She gives final liberation to those who want it, and gives happiness to those that want happiness. She is the Lakṣmī of the Heavens; She is also the Lakṣmī of every household. She is the *tapas* of the ascetics, the beauty of the kingdoms of the kings, the burning power of fire, the brilliance of the Sun, the tender beauty of the Moon, the lovely beauty of the lotus and the Śakti of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the highest Self. The Self, the world all are powerful by Her Śakti; without Her, everything would be a dreary dead mass. O Nārada! She is the seed of this tree of the world; She is eternal; She is the stay, She is intelligence, fruits, hunger, thirst, mercy, sleep, drowsiness, forgiveness, fortitude, peace, bashfulness, nourishment, contentment and luster. Mūla-Prakṛti stood before Śrī Kṛṣṇa, praising Him. The Lord of Rādhikā then gave Her a throne.

O great Muni! At this moment sprang from the navel lotus the four-faced Brahmā, with his wife Sāvitrī, an exceedingly beautiful woman. No sooner the four-faced Brahmā, the foremost of the Jñānins, fond of asceticism and holding Kāmaṇḍalū in His hand came into being, than He began to praise Śrī Kṛṣṇa by His four mouths. On the other hand the Devī Sāvitrī, with a beauty of one hundred moons, born with great ease, wearing apparel purified by fire and decorated with various ornaments praised Kṛṣṇa, the one and only cause of the universe, and then took Her seat gladly with Her husband on the throne made of jewels. At that time Kṛṣṇa divided Himself into two parts; His left side turned into the forn of Mahādeva; and His right side turned into the Lord of Gopīkās (cowherd women). The color and splendor of the body of Mahādeva is pure white like white crystal; as if one

hundred suns have arisen simultaneously. In His hands there are the trident (*triśul*) and sharp-edged spear (*pattisa*); He is wearing a tiger skin; on His head is matted hair (*jatā*) of a tawny hue like molten gold; His body was besmeared all over with ashes, smile reigning in His face and on His forehead, the crescent moon. He has no clothing on His loins; so He is called Digambara (the quarters of the sky being His clothing); His neck is of a blue color; the serpent being the ornaments on His body and on His right hand the nice *mālā* of jewels, well-purified. Who is always repeating with His five faces the eternal light of Brahman, and Who has conquered death by praising Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is of the nature of Truth, the highest Self, God incarnate, the material cause of all things, the all-auspicious of all that is good and favorable, the destroyer of the fear of birth, death, old age and disease, and Who has been named Mṛtyunjaya (the conqueror of death). This Mahādeva took His seat on a throne made of jewels (diamonds, emeralds, etc.)."

Here ends the Second Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the origin of Prakṛti and Puruṣa in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter III—Origin of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa and others

1-34. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Devarṣi! The egg (born of Mūla-Prakṛti) that was floating in the waters for a period equal to the life period of Brahmā, now in the fullness of time separated into two parts. Within that egg there was a powerful child, lustrous like a billion suns. This child could not suck mother's milk, as it was forsaken by Her. So being tired from hunger, for a moment He cried repeatedly. The child that will become the Lord of countless *brahmāṇḍas* (universes), now an orphan having no father nor mother, began to look upwards from the waters. This boy came to be denominated afterwards by the name of Mahā-Virāt, when he became gross and grosser. As there is nothing finer than radium, so there is nothing grosser than Mahā-Virāt. The power of this Mahā-Virāt is one-sixteenth of that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Highest Self. But this boy, born of the Prakṛti Rādhā is

the sole stay of all this universe, and He is denominated by the name Mahā-Viṣṇu. In his every pore countless universes are existing—so many that even Śrī Kṛṣṇa could not count them. If it were possible to count the number of dust particles, it is impossible to count the number of universes. So there are endless Brahmās, Viṣṇus and Maheśvaras. In every Brahmāṇḍa, there is Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśa. Each Brahmāṇḍa extends from Pātāla to Brahmaloka. The abode of Vaikuṇṭha is higher than that—situated outside of the *brahmāṇḍa*—again the abode of Goloka is fifty *koti yojanas* (50 x 10 x 4 x 2 million miles) higher than Vaikuṇṭha. This Goloka *dhāma* is eternal and real, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa is eternal and real. This world composed of the seven islands is surrounded by the seven oceans. Forty-nine *upa-dvīpas* (smaller islands adjacent to them) also exist here. Besides, there are countless mountains and forests. Higher than this earth is the Brahmaloka with seven heavens, and below this are the seven Pātālas. This is the bounding limit of the *brahmāṇḍa*. Just above this earth there is the Bhūrloka; above is Bhuvarloka; then Svarloka, Janarloka, Taparloka then Satyaloka, and above that is Brahmaloka.

The splendor of Brahmaloka is like that of molten gold. But all substances, whether outside or inside this Brahmaloka, are transient. When this *brahmāṇḍa* dissolves, everything dissolves and is destroyed. All are temporary like bubbles of water. Only Goloka and Vaikuṇṭha are eternal. In every pore of this Mahā-Virāt exists one *brahmāṇḍa* (cosmos). What to speak of others, even Kṛṣṇa cannot count the number of these *brahmāṇḍas*. In every *brahmāṇḍa* there is Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa. O child Nārada! In every *brahmāṇḍa*, the number of the gods is three *kotis* or 30 million. Some of them are the Dikpatis (Regents of the quarters); some are the Dikpālas (Rulers of the quarters), some are asterisms (*nakṣatras*) and some are planets. In the Bhūrloka, there are four *varṇas* (*brāhmaṇas*, etc.,) and in the Pātālas there are Nāgas. Thus the universe exists composed of moveable and non-moveable things (*brahmāṇḍa-vivṛti*).

O Nārada! Now the Virāt-Puruṣa began to look up to the skies again and again but He could not see anything within that egg except the void. Then

distressed with hunger, He cried out repeatedly and became merged in anxiety. Next moment getting back His consciousness, He began to think of Kṛṣṇa, the highest person and saw there at once the eternal light of Brahman. He saw there His form as deep blue like new raincloud; with two hands, yellow garment, sweet smile on His face, *mālā* in His hand, He seemed to be very anxious to show His Grace to the devotees. Looking at the Lord, His Father, the boy became glad and smiled. The Lord, the bestower of boons, granted him boons appropriate for that moment 'O Child! Let You possess knowledge like Me; let Your hunger and thirst vanish; let you be the holder of innumerable *brahmāṇḍas* until the time of *pralaya* (universal dissolution). Be without any selfishness, be fearless and the bestower of boons to all. Let not old age, death, disease, sorrow nor any other ailings afflict Thee.' Thus saying, He repeated thrice in His ear the six-lettered great *mantra* ***āūṁ kṛṣṇāya svāhā,*** worshipped by the *Vedas* with their *aṅgas*, the giver of desires and the destroyer of all troubles and calamities.

O Brahmā's son! Thus giving the *mantra*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa arranged for His feeding thus: in every universe, whatever offerings will be given to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one sixteenth of that will go to Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha and fifteen-sixteenth is to go to this boy, the Virāt. Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not allot any share for Himself. Himself transcending all the *guṇas*, and full, He is always satisfied with Himself. What necessity is there for any further offerings? Whatever the people offer with devotion, the Lord of Lakṣmī, the Virāt eats all these. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa giving thus to the Virāt the boon and *mantra* said: 'O Child! Say what more you desire; I will give You that instantly.' The Virāt boy, hearing thus the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, spoke: 'O Thou Omnipresent! I have got no desires whatsoever, save this—that as long as I live, whether for a short time or for a long time, let me have pure *bhakti* towards Thy lotus feet.

35-41. In this world he is *jīvanmukta* (liberated whilst living) who is your *bhakta;* and that bewildered fool is dead while living who is devoid of any *bhakti* to Thee. What needs he to perform *japam*, asceticism, sacrifice,

worship, holding fasts and observances, going to sacred places of pilgrimages and other virtuous acts, if he be without any *bhakti* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa? Vain is his life who is devoid of any devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, under Whose Grace he has obtained his life, and Whom he does not now pay homage and worship. He is endowed with Śakti as long as *ātma* (Self) resides in his body; no sooner the *ātma* departs from his body all the Śaktis accompany him. O Great One! And thou art the universal *ātman* (soul) who transcends Prakṛti, Who is all-will, the primeval person of the nature of the highest Light.'

O child! Thus saying, the Virāt boy remained silent. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then spoke in sweet words: 'O Child! Let You remain ever-fresh like Me. You will not have any fall, even if innumerable Brahmās pass away.

42-57. Let you divide yourself in parts and turn into smaller Virāts in every universe. Brahmā will spring from your navel and will create the cosmos. From the forehead of that Brahmā will spring eleven Rudras for the destruction of the creation. But they will all be parts of Śiva. Of these eleven Rudras, the Rudra named Kālāgni will be the destroyer of all this *viśvas* (cosmos). Besides, from each of your subdivisions, Viśnu will originate, and that Bhagavān Viṣṇu will be the preserver of this *viśvas* world. I declare that by My favor you will always be full of *bhakti* towards Me and no sooner you meditate on Me, you will be able to see My lovely form. There is no doubt about this; and Your Mother, Who resides in My breast, will not be difficult for You to see. Let You remain here in ease and comfort. I now go to Goloka.'

Saying thus, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the world, disappeared. Going to His own abode, He spoke instantly to Brahmā and Śaṅkara, skilled in the works of creation and destruction: 'O child Brahmā! Go quickly and be born in parts from the navels of each of the smaller Virāts who will arise from the pores of the Great Virāt. O Child Mahādeva! Go and be born in parts from the forehead of each Brahmā in every universe for the destruction of the creation, and perform austerities for a long, long time. O son of the creator Brahmā!'

Thus saying, the Lord of the Universe remained silent. Brahmā and Śiva the auspicious, bowing to the Lord, went to their own duties. On the other hand, the great Virāt who lay floating in the waters of the *brahmāṇḍa* sphere, created from his every pore each smaller Virāt. That youth Janārdan of the form of the great cosmos, wearing yellow garments, of the bluish-green color of the *durba* grass, lay sleeping, pervading everywhere. Brahmā took his birth in His navel. Then after his birth, he began to travel in that navel-lotus and in the stem of the lotus for one *lakh yugas*. But he could not find out the place whence the lotus or its stem had sprung up.

O Nārada! Then your father Brahmā became very anxious, came back to his former place and began to meditate on the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Then in meditation, with his introspective eye, he first saw the small Virāt, then the endless great Virāt lying on the watery bed, in whose pores the universes are existing and then he saw the God Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Goloka with *gopas* and *gopīs*. He then began to praise the Lord of Goloka when He granted boons to your father, and he began to do the work of creation.

58-62. From the mind of your father, were born first Śanaka and other brothers, and then from his forehead eleven Rudras sprang. Then from the left side of that small Virāt lying on the bed of waters, came the four-handed Viṣṇu Bhagavān, the preserver of the universe. He went to Śvetadvīpa, where he remained. Then your father became engaged in creating this universe, moveable and non-moveable, composed of three worlds—heaven, earth and Pātāla—in the navel of that small Virāt Puruṣa. O Nārada! Thus from the pores of that great Virāt each universe has sprung; and in every universe there is one small Virāt, one Brahmā, one Viṣṇu, one Śiva and Śanaka and others. O best of the twice born! Thus I have described the glories of Kṛṣṇa, that give exceeding pleasure and *mokṣa*. Now say what more you want to hear?"

Here ends the Third Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the Origin of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa and others in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IV—the Hymn, Worship and Kavaca of Sarasvatī Devī

1-3. Nārada said: "By Your Grace I have heard everything, very sweet like nectar, of the origin of things. Now may I ask You which Devī of these five Prakṛtis has been worshipped, and by what *mantra?* and by whom? How has each of them been praised? and by whom? How has the worship of their *mūrtis* (forms) become prevalent in this world? What are the *stotram* (hymn of praise), the *dhyāna* (meditation), glory and life of these? Also what sort of boon do each of the Devīs grant? and to whom? Kindly describe all these in detail."

4-29. Nārāyaṇa said: "O child! Durgā the mother of Gaṇeśa, Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī, these are the five Prakṛtis sprung directly from Mūla-Prakṛti. The methods of their worship, wonderful glorious acts, excellent *stotrams*, and their lives inculcating good to all, sweet like nectar, are all widely written in the *Vedas, Purāṇas, Tantras* and other *śāstras*. So there is no need to describe them here again. Now I am describing in detail the auspicious character of these that are sprung from the parts and *kalās* of the Prakṛti. Hear attentively.

Kālī, Vasundharā, Gaṅgā, Saṣṭhī, Maṅgal Caṇḍikā, Tulasī, Manasā, Nidrā, Svadhā, Svāhā and Dakśiṇā—these are the parts of Prakṛti. By and by I will describe, briefly, their merit-giving characters, pleasant to hear. Along with these I will describe the *karmas* of the *jīvas*, and the great exalted lives of Durgā and Rādhā. I am now describing Sarasvatī's character. Hear, O Muni!

Śrī Kṛṣṇa introduced first in this Bhārata, the worship of the Devī Sarasvatī, the holder of *vīnā* in Her hands, under whose influence the hearts of illiterate stupid persons become illumined with knowledge. The amorous Devī Sarasvatī sprang from the end of the lips of Rādhā, and so she desired to marry Kṛsṇa out of amorous feelings. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the controller of the hearts of all, knew it instantly and addressed the Mother of the people in true words proper to Her and beneficial to Her in the end: 'O Chaste One! The four-armed Nārāyaṇa is born from My parts; He is young, of good

features and endowed with all qualifications; so much so, he is like Me. He is a knower of amorous sentiments of women and He fulfils those desires; what to speak of His beauty, ten million Cupids are playing in His body. O Beloved! if You desire to marry and remain with Me, that will not be of any good to You. For Rādhā is near to Me; She is more powerful than You. If a man be stronger than another, he can rescue one who takes his shelter; but if he be weaker, how can he then, himself weak, protect his dependant from others? Though I am the Lord of all, and rule all, yet I cannot control Rādhā. For She is equal to Me in power, beauty, qualifications—equal to Me in every respect. Again it is impossible for Me to quit Rādhā, for She is the presiding Deity of My life. Who can relinquish life? Though a son is very dear to his father, still it may be questioned, is he dearer than his father's life? So, O auspicious one! Go to the abode Vaikuṇṭha; You will get Your desires fulfilled there. You will get the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha for Your husband, and You will live ever in peace and enjoy happiness. Though Lakṣmī is residing there, yet like You, She is not under the control of lust, anger, greed, delusion and vanity. She is also equal to you in beauty, qualities, and power. So you will live with Her in great delight; and Hari, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, will treat both of you equally. Moreover, I say this in particular that in every universe, on the fifth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Māgha, every year, the day when the learning is commenced, a great festival will be held and men, Manus, Devas, and the Munis desirous of liberation, Vasus, Yogīs, Nāgas, Siddhas, Gandarvas, Rākṣasas—all will perform your worship with devotion in every *kalpa* until the time of *mahā-pralaya* comes. All are required to be *jitendriya* (having their senses under control) and *samyamī* (concentrating his mind with a religious vow) and they will invoke Thee on a jar or on *skandhas,* and then meditate according to what is stated in the *Kanva śākhā* of *Yajur-veda,* and then worship and sing hymns to Thee. Thy *kavaca* (an armor; a mystical syllable considered as a preservative like armor) is written on the bark of the Bhūrja tree, and then with eight kinds of scents mingled with it, is placed within a golden nut or ring named *māduli* and then held on the neck or on the right arm. The learned should recite Thy *stotras* during worship.'

Thus saying, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself worshipped Devī Sarasvatī. Since then, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa, Ananta Deva, Dharma, Sanaka and other Munīndras, all the Devas, Munis, all the kings and all human beings worship Devī Sarasvatī. O Nārada! Thus the worship of the Eternal Devī is made extant in the three worlds."

30-31. Nārada said: "O Chief of the knowers of the *Vedas!* Now describe to me the methods of worship, *dhyāna, kavacam*, hymns, the appropriate offerings of the *pūjā,* flowers, sandalwood paste and other good things necessary in this worship, which are so sweet to hear. I am ever very eager and anxious to hear these."

32-59. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! I am now stating the method of worship of the Devī Sarasvatī, the Mother of the worlds, according to the *Kanva-śākhā* of the *Yajur-veda*. Hear. On the day previous to the fifth day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Māgha,* or the day of commencement of education, the devotee should control his senses, concentrate his mind and take his bath. Then he is to perform his daily duties and install the clay pot (*ghata*) with devotion and according to the *mantras* of the *Kanva-śākhā* or the *Tantra*, as the case may be. He is to worship first on that *ghata* (jar) Gaṇapati (Gaṇeśa), then meditate on the Devī Sarasvatī as described below, invoke Her and again read the *dhyāna;* and then worship with *sodaśopacāra* (sixteen good articles offered in the worship).

O Good One! Now I am speaking according to my knowledge about the offerings as ordained in the *Vedas* or *Tantras*. Hear. Fresh butter, curd, thickened milk, rice freed from the husk by frying, sweetmeats (*til laddu*) prepared of sesame, sugar cane, sugarcane juice, nice *gud* (molasses), honey, *svastik*, sugar, unbroken rice out of white *dhān*, *chipitak* of table rice (*ālo chāl*), white *modak, harbisyānna* prepared of boiled rice with clarified butter and salt, *pistaka* of *jaoā* or wheat flour, *paramānna* with ghee, nectarean sweetmeats, coconut, coconut water, *svastik pistaka*, *svastik* and ripe plantain *pistaka, kaseru* root, *mūlā*, ginger, ripe plantains, excellent *bel* fruit, the *jujube* fruit, and other appropriate white purified fruits of the season and peculiar to the place are to be offered in the *pūjā*.

O Nārada! White flowers of good scent, white sandalwood paste of good scent, new white clothes, nice conchshell, nice garlands of white flowers, nice white necklaces, and beautiful ornaments are to be given to the Devī. I say now the *dhyānam*, sweet to hear, of the Devī Sarasvatī according to the *Vedas*, capable to remove all errors! Hear.

> I hereby bow down to the Devī Sarasvatī, of a white color, of a smiling countenance and exceedingly beautiful, the luster of whose body overpowers that of ten million moons, whose garment is purified by fire, in whose hands there are *vīnā* and *skandhas* (holy books), who is decorated with new excellent ornaments of jewels and pearls and whom Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara and the other Devas, Munis, Manus and men constantly worship.

Thus meditating the Devī, the intelligent persons should offer all articles, after pronouncing the root *mantra*. Then he is to recite hymns, wear the *kavaca* and make s*astānga pranāms* before the Devī. O Muni! Those whose Devī Sarasvatī is the presiding Deity, are not to be spoken of at all (i.e., they will naturally do all these things and with a greater fervor). Besides all should worship the Devī Sarasvatī on the day of commencement of education and every year on the *śūkla panchamī* day of the month of *Māgha*. The eight-lettered *mantra* ***aiṁ klīṁ sarasvatyai namaḥ***, as mentioned in the *Vedas* is the root *mantra* of Sarasvatī. Or the *mantra* to which each worshipper is initiated is his *mūla-mantra* (root *mantra*).

Or uttering the *mantra* ***śrīṁ hṛīṁ sarasvatyai svāhā***, one is to offer everything to the Devī Sarasvatī. This *mantra* is the *kalpa-vṛkṣa* (the tree that yields all desires). Nārāyaṇa the ocean of mercy, gave in ancient times this very *mantra* to Vālmikī in the holy land of Bhāratavarṣa on the banks of the Ganges; next Bhṛgu gave this *mantra* on the occasion of solar eclipse to Mahārṣi Sukrācārya on the Puṣkara Tīrtha; Mārīcha gave it to Bṛhaspati on a lunar eclipse; Brahmā gave it to Bhṛgu in the Vadarikā *āśrama;* Jaratkarā gave it to Āstika on the shore of the Kṣīroda ocean; Bibhāndaka gave this to the intelligent Ṛsyaṣṛṅga on the Sumeru mountain, Śiva gave this to Kanāda and Gotama, Sūrya gave it to Yājñavalkya and Kātyāyana, Ananta

Deva gave it to Pānini, to the intelligent Bhāradvāja and to Śākatāyana in Bali's assembly in the Pātāla-loka. If this *mantra* be repeated four *lakhs* of times, all men attain success. And when they become *siddhas* with this *mantra*, they become powerful like Bṛhaspati. In past times, the creator Brahmā gave a *kavaca* named Viśvajāya to Bhṛgu on the Gandhamādana Mountain. I now speak of that. Hear.

60-61. Once on a time Bhṛgu asked Brahmā the Lord of all, and adored by all, thus: "O Brahmā! Thou art the foremost of those that know the *Vedas;* there is none equal to thee in matters regarding the knowledge of the *Vedas* —so much so that there is nothing that is not known to Thee; for all these worlds and creatures have sprung from Thee. Now please tell about the *viśvajāya-kavaca* of the Devī Sarasvatī that is excellent, without any faults and embodying in it all the properties of all the *mantras*."

62-91. Brahmā said: "O Child! What you have asked about the *kavaca* of Sarasvatī is sweet to hear, ordained and worshipped by the *Vedas*, and the giver of all desired fruits; now hear of that. In the very beginning, the all-pervading Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the *rāsa* circle, mentioned this *kavaca* to me in the holy Vṛṇḍāvana forest in the abode Goloka at the time of *rāsa* in the *rāsa-maṇḍala*. This is very secret; it is full of holy unheard, wonderful *mantras*. Reading this *kavaca* and wearing it (on one's arm), Bṛhaspati has become foremost in matters of intelligence; by the force of this *kavaca* Śukrāchārya has got his ascendancy over the Daityas; the foremost Muni Vālmikī has become eloquent and skilled in language and has become Kavīndra and Svāyambhuva Manu; wearing this *kavaca* he has become honored everywhere. Kanāda, Gotama, Kanva, Pānini, Śakatāyana, Dakṣa, and Kātyāyana all have become great authors by virtue of this *kavaca;* Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa made the classification of the *Vedas* and composed the eighteen *Purāṇas*. Śātātapa, Samvarta, Vasiṣṭha, Parāśara and Yājñavalkya became authors by wearing and reading this Sarasvatī *kavaca*. Ṛsyaṣṛṅga, Bhāradvāja, Āstika, Devala, Jaigisavya, and Yāyāti all were honored everywhere by virtue of this *kavaca*. O Dvija! The Prajāpati Himself is the Ṛṣi of this *kavaca*; Brihatī is its *chhanda;* and Śāradā Ambikā is

its presiding Deity. Its application (*viniyoga*) is in the acquisition of spiritual knowlege, in the fruition of any desires or necessities, in composing poems or anywhere wheresoever success is required.

May *śrīṁ hṛīṁ sarasvatyai svāhā* protect fully my head;
Śrīṁ vāgdevatāyai svāhā, my forehead;
Āūm̊ hṛīṁ sarasvatyai svāhā, my ears always;
Āūm̊ śrīṁ hṛīṁ bhagabatyai sarasvatyai svāhā always my eyes;
Aiṁ hṛīṁ vāgvādinyai svāhā, always my nose;
Āūm̊ hṛīṁ Vidyadhisthātrī Devyai Svāhā, my lips always;
Āūm̊ śrīṁ hṛīṁ brahmyai svāhā my rows of teeth;
Aiṁ, this single letter protect my neck;
Āūm̊ śrīṁ hṛīṁ my throat;
Śrīṁ, my shoulders,
Āūm̊ hṛīṁ vidyādhisthātrī devyai svāhā, always my chest;
Āūm̊ hṛīṁ vidyadhisvarūpāyai svāhā, my navel;
Āūm̊ hṛīṁ klīṁ vānyai svāhā my hands;
Āūm̊ svarva vārnatmīkāyai svāhā my feet;
and let *āūm̊ vāgadhisthātridevyai svāhā* protect all my body.
Let *āūm̊ sarvakanthavāsinyai svāhā* protect my east;
Let *āūm̊ svarvajibhāgra vāsinyai svāhā*, the Southeast;
Āūm̊ aiṁ hṛīṁ śrīṁ klīṁ sarasvatyai budhajananyai svāhā, my South;
Aiṁ hṛīṁ śrīṁ, this three-lettered *mantra* my Southwest;
Āūm̊ aiṁ jhibhagravāsinyai svāhā, my West;
Āūm̊ svarvam bikāyai svāhā, my Northwest;
Āūm̊ aiṁ śrīṁ klīṁ gadyavāsinyai svāhā my North;
Aiṁ sarvaśāstra vasinyai svāhā, my North-east;
Āūm̊ hṛīṁ sarvapujitayai svāhā, my top;
Āūm̊ hṛīṁ puṣṭakavasinyai svāhā my below; and
let *āūm̊ grantha vījasvarupāyai svāhā* protect all my sides.

O Nārada! This *viśvajāya-kavaca* of the nature of Brahman and its embodied *mantra* I have now spoken to you. I heard this before from the mouth of Dharma Deva in the Gandhāmādana Mountain. Now I speak this to you out of my great affection for you. But never divulge this to anybody. One is to worship one's spiritual Teacher (Gurudeva) according to due rites and ceremonies with clothing, ornaments and sandalwood-paste, fall down prostrate to him, and then take this *kavaca*. Repeating this five *lakhs* of times, one gets success and becomes a *siddha*. The wearer of this *kavaca* becomes intelligent like Bṛhaspati, eloquent, *kavīndra* (king of poets), and the conqueror of the three worlds, no sooner one becomes a *siddha* in this. In fact, he can conquer everything by virtue of this *kavaca*.

O Muni! Thus I have described to you this *kavaca* according to *Kānva-śākhā*. Now I will speak about the method of worship, *dhyāna* and the praise of this *kavaca*. Hear."

Here ends the Fourth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the hymn, worship and Kavaca of Sarasvatī Devī in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter V—Yājñavalkya's Sarasvatī-stotra

1-5 Nārāyaṇa continued: "O Nārada! I now describe the *stotra* (hymn) of Sarasvatī Devī, yielding all desires that Yājñavalkya, the best of the Ṛṣis recited in days of yore to Her. The Muni Yajñavalkya forgot all the *Vedas* out of the curse of his *guru* and with a very sad heart went to the Sun, the great merit-giving place. There he practiced austerities for a time when the Lolākhya Sun became visible to him, when, being overpowered by great sorrow, he began to cry repeatedly; and then he sang hymns to him. Then Bhagavān Sūrya Deva became pleased and taught him all the *Vedas* with their *aṅgas* (limbs) and said: "O child! Now sing hymns to Sarasvatī Devī that you get back your memory." Thus saying, the Sun disappeared. The Muni Yājñavalkya finished his bath, and with his heart full of devotion began to sing hymns to Vāg-devī, the Goddess of Speech.

6-32. Yājñavalkya said: 'O Mother! Have mercy on me. By *guru's* curse, my memory is lost; I am now void of learning and have become powerless; my sorrow knows no bounds. Give me knowledge, learning, memory, power to impart knowledge to disciples, power to compose *skandhas*, and also good disciples endowed with genius and *pratibhā* (ready wit). So that in the council of good and learned men my intelligence and power of argument and judgment may be fully known. Whatever I lost by my bad luck, let all that come back to my heart and be renewed, as if sprouts come again out of the heaps of ashes. O Mother! Thou art of the nature of Brahman, superior to all; Thou art of the nature of Light eternal; Thou art the presiding Deity of all the branches of learning. So I bow down again and again to Thee. O Mother! The suffixes *anusvāra, visarga* and *candrabindu*, Thou art those letters. So obeisance to Thee! O Mother! Thou art the exposition (*vyākhyā*) of the *śāstras;* Thou art the presiding Deity of all the expositions and annotations. Without Thee no mathematician can count anything. So Thou art the numbers to count time; Thou art the Śakti by which *siddhāntas* (definite conclusions) are arrived at; thus Thou dost remove the errors of men. So again and again obeisance to Thee. O Mother! Thou art the Śakti, memory, knowledge, intelligence, *pratibhā*, and imagination (*kalpanā*). So I bow down again and again to Thee.

Sanatkumāra fell into error and asked Brahmā for a solution. He became unable to solve the difficulties and remained speechless like a dumb person. Then Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the highest Self arriving there, said: 'O Prajāpati! Better praise and sing hymns to the Goddess of speech; then your desires will be fulfilled.' Then the four-faced Brahmā, advised by the Lord, praised Devī Sarasvatī; and, by Her grace, arrived at a very nice *siddhānta* (conclusion). One day the goddess Earth questioned one doubt to Ananta Deva, when He being unable to answer, remained silent like a dumb person. At last He became afraid; and advised by Kaśyapa, praised Thee when He resolved the doubt and came to a definite conclusion. Vedavyāsa once went to Vālmīki and asked him about some *sūtras* of the *Purāṇas,* when the Muni Vālmīki got confounded and remembered Thee, the Mother of the world. Then by Thy Grace, the Light flashed within him and

his error vanished. Thereby he became able to solve the question. Then Vyāsadeva, born of the parts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, heard about the *Purāṇa sūtras* from Vālmīki's mouth and came to know about Thy glory. He then went to Puṣkara Tīrtha and became engaged in worshipping Thee, the giver of peace, for one hundred years. Then Thou didst become pleased and grant him the boon when he ascended to the rank of the *kavīndra* (Indra or king amongst the poets). He then made the classification of the *Vedas* and composed the eighteen *Purāṇas*. When Sadā-Śiva was questioned on some spiritual knowledge by Mahendra, He thought of Thee for a moment and then answered. Once Indra asked Bṛhaspati, the *guru* of the Devas, about *śabda-śāstra* (scriptures on sound). He became unable to give any answer. So he went to Puṣkara Tīrtha and worshipped Thee for a thousand years according to the Deva measure, and he became afterwards able to give instructions on *śabda-śāstra* for one thousand divine years to Mahendra.

O Sureśvarī! Those Munis that give education to their disciples or those that commence their own studies remember Thee before they commence their works respectively. The Munīndras, Manus, men, Daityendras and immortals, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa all worship Thee and sing hymns to Thee. Viṣṇu ultimately becomes inert when He goes on praising Thee by His thousand mouths. So Mahādeva becomes when he praises by His five mouths; and so Brahmā by His four mouths. When great personages so desist, then what to speak of me, who is an ordinary mortal having one mouth only!"

Thus saying, the Mahārṣi Yājñavalkya, who had observed fasting, bowed down to the Devī Sarasvatī with great devotion and began to cry. Then the Mahāmāyā Sarasvatī, of the nature of Light could not hide Herself away. She became visible to him and said "O child! You become good *kavīndra* (Indra of the poets)." Granting him this boon, She went to Vaikuṇṭha. Whoever reads this *stotra* of Sarasvatī by Yājñavalkya becomes a good poet —eloquent and intelligent like Bṛhaspati. Even if a great illiterate reads this Sarasvatī-*stotra* for one year, he easily becomes a good *paṇḍita*, intelligent, and a good poet."

Here ends the Fifth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on Sarasvatī-stotra by Yājñavalkya in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VI—the Appearance of Lakṣmī, Gaṅgā and Sarasvatī

1-10. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! Sarasvatī lives always in Vaikuṇṭha close to Nārada. One day a quarrel arose with Gaṅgā, and by Her curse, Sarasvatī came in parts as a river here in this Bhārata. She is reckoned in Bhārata as a great, sanctifiying holy and merit-giving river. The good persons serve Her always, residing on Her banks. She is the *tapasyā* and the fruit thereof of the ascetics. She is like the burning fire to the sins of the sinners. Those that die in Bhārata on Sarasvatī's banks with their full consciousness, live forever in Vaikuṇṭha in the council of Hari. Those that bathe in Sarasvatī's waters after committing sins, become easily freed of them and live for a long, long time in Viṣṇuloka. If one bathes even once in the Sarasvatī waters during *cāturmāsya* (a vow that lasts four months) in full moon time, in *aksyayā* or when the day ends, in *vyatīpāta-yoga*, in the time of eclipse or on any other holy day, or through any other concomitant cause, or even without any faith and out of sheer disregard, one is able to go to Vaikuṇṭha and get the nature of Śrī Hari. If one repeats the Sarasvatī *mantra*, residing on the banks of the Sarasvatī for one month, a great illiterate can become a great poet. There is no doubt about this. Once shaving one's head, if one resides on the banks of the Sarasvatī, daily bathes in it, one will have not to meet with the pain of being again born in the womb. O Nārada! Thus I have described a little of the unbounded glories of Bhārata that give happiness and the fruits of all desires."

11. Sūta said: "O Saunaka! The Muni Nārada hearing thus, asked again at that very moment to solve his doubts. I am now speaking of that. Hear."

12-15. Nārada said: "O Lord! How did the Devī Sarasvatī quarrel with the Devī Gaṅgā, and how did She by Her curse turn out in India, into a holy river giving virtues. I am becoming more and more eager and impatient to hear about this critical incident. I do not find satiety in drinking Your

nectar-like words. Who finds satiety in getting his good weal? Why did Gaṅgā curse Sarasvatī, who is worshipped everywhere? Gaṅgā is also full of *sattva-guṇa*. She always bestows good and virtue to all. Both of them are fiery and it is pleasant to hear the cause of quarrels between those two. These topics are very rarely found in the *Purāṇas*. So You ought to describe that to me."

16-21. Nārāyaṇa said: "Hear, O Nārada! I will now describe that incident, the hearing of which removes all sins. Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Gaṅgā, the three wives of Hari and all equally loved, remain always close to Hari. One day Gaṅgā cast sidelong glances frequently towards Nārāyaṇa and was eagerly looking at Him, with smile on Her lips. Seeing this, Lord Nārāyaṇa was startled and looked at Gaṅgā and smiled also. Lakṣmī saw that, but she did not take any offense. But Sarasvatī became very angry. Padmā (Lakṣmī) who was of *sattva-guṇa*, began to console in various ways the wrathful Sarasvatī; but She could not be appeased by any means. Rather Her face became red out of anger; she began to tremble out of her feelings (passion); Her lips quivered; and She began to speak to Her husband:

22-38. 'The husband that is good, religious, and well-qualified looks on his all the wives equally; but it is just the opposite with him who is a cheat. O Gadādhara! You are partial to Gaṅgā; and so is the case with Lakṣmī. I am the only one that is deprived of Your love. It is, therefore, that Gaṅgā and Padmā are in love with each other; for you love Padmā. So why shall not Padmā bear this contrary thing! I am only unfortunate. What use is there in holding my life? Her life is useless, who is deprived of her husband's love. Those that declare You of *sattva-guṇa*, ought not ever to be called *paṇḍitas*. They are quite illiterate; they have not the least knowledge of the *Vedas*. They are quite impotent to understand the nature of Your mind.'

O Nārada! Hearing Sarasvatī's words and knowing that she had become very angry, Nārāyaṇa thought for a moment and then went away outside. When Nārāyaṇa had thus gone away, Sarasvatī became fearless and began to abuse Gaṅgā downright out of anger in an abusive language, hard to hear: 'O shameless one! O passionate one! What pride do you feel for your

husband? Do you like to show that your husband loves you much? I will destroy your pride today. I will see today, it will be seen by others also, what your Hari can do for you!'

Saying thus, Sarasvatī rose up to catch hold of Gaṅgā by Her hairs violently. Padmā intervened to stop this. Sarasvatī became very violent and cursed Lakṣmī: 'No doubt you will be turned into a tree and into a river. Inasmuch as seeing this undue behavior of Gaṅgā, you do not step forward to speak anything in this assembly, as if you are a tree or a river.' Padmā did not become at all angry, even when she heard of the above curse. She became sorry and, holding the hands of Sarasvatī, remained silent. Then Gaṅgā became very angry; Her lips began to quiver frequently. Seeing the mad fiery nature of the red-eyed Sarasvatī, she told Lakṣmī: 'O Padme! Leave that wicked foul-mouthed woman. What will she do to me? She presides over speech and therefore likes always to remain with quarrels. Let Her show Her force how far can she quarrel with me. She wants to test the strength of us. So leave Her. Let all know today our strength and prowess.'

39-44. Thus saying, Gaṅgā became ready to curse Sarasvatī and addressing Lakṣmī, said: 'O Dear Padme! As that woman has cursed you to become a river, so I too curse her, that she, too, be turned into a river and she would go to the abode of men, the sinners, to the world and take their heaps of sins.' Hearing this curse of Gaṅgā, Sarasvatī gave her curse, 'You, too, will have to descend into the Bhurloka (the world) as a river, taking all the sins of the sinners.'

O Nārada! While there was going on this quarrel, the four-armed omniscient Bhagavān Hari came up there accompanied by four attendants of His, all four-armed, took Sarasvatī in His breast and began to speak all the previous mysteries. Then they came to know the cause of their quarrels and why they cursed one another and all became very sorry. At that time Bhagavān Hari told them one by one:

45-67. 'O Lakṣmī! Let you be born in parts, without being born in any womb, in the world as the daughter in the house of the King Dharma-dhvaja. You will have to take the form of a tree there, out of this evil turn of fate. There Śankhachūda, the Indra of the Asuras, born of my parts will marry you. After that you will come back here and be my wife as now. There is no doubt about this. You will be named Tulasī, the purifier of the three worlds, in Bhārata. O beautiful one! Now go there quickly and be a river in your parts under the name Padmāvatī. O Gange! You will also have to take incarnation in Bhārata as a river, purifying all the worlds, to destroy the sins of the inhabitants of Bhārata. Bhagiratha will take you there after much entreating and worshipping you; and you will be famous by the name Bhagirathī, the most sanctifying river in the world. There, the ocean born of my parts, and the King Śāntanu also born of my parts will be your husbands. O Bharatī! Let you go also and incarnate in part in Bhārata under the curse of Gaṅgā. O good-natured one! Now go in full *aṁsas* to Brahmā and become His wife. Let Gaṅgā go also in Her fullness to Śiva. Let Padmā remain with Me. Padmā is of a peaceful nature, void of anger, devoted to Me and of *sāttvik* nature. Chaste, good-natured, fortunate, and religious woman like Padmā are very rare. Those women that are born of the parts of Padmā are all very religious and devoted to their husbands. They are peaceful and good-natured and worshipped in every universe.

It is forbidden, nay, opposed to the *Vedas*, to keep three wives, three servants, three friends of different natures, at one place. They never conduce to any welfare. They are the fruitful sources of all jealousies and quarrels. Where, in any family females are powerful like men and males are submissive to females, the birth of the male is useless. At his every step, he meets with difficulties and bitter experiences. He ought to retire to the forest whose wife is foul-mouthed, of bad birth and fond of quarrels. The great forest is better for him than his house. That man does not get in his house any water for washing his feet, or any seat to sit on, or any fruit to eat—nothing whatsoever; but in the forest, all these are not unavailable. Rather to dwell amidst rapacious animals or to enter into fire than remain with a bad wife.

O fair one! Rather the pains of the disease or venom are bearable, but the words of a bad wife are hard to bear. Death is far better than that. Those that are under the control of their wives, know that they never get their peace of mind until they are laid on their funeral pyres. They never see the fruits of what they daily do. They have no fame anywhere, neither in this world nor in the next. Ultimately the fruit is this: that they have to go to hell and remain there. His life is verily a heavy burden who is without any name or fame. Never it is for the least good that many co-wives remain at one place. When, by taking one wife only a man does not become happy, then imagine how painful it becomes to have many wives. O Gange! Go to Śiva. O Sarasvatī! Go to Brahmā. Let the good-natured Kāmalā, residing on the lotus remain with Me. He gets in this world happiness and *dharma,* and in the next *mukti* whose wife is chaste and obedient. In fact he is *mukta*, pure and happy whose wife is chaste; and he whose wife is foul-natured, is rendered impure, unhappy and dead whilst he is living.'

Here ends the Sixth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the coming in this world of Lakṣmī, Gaṅgā and Sarasvatī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VII—the Curses of Gaṅgā, Sarasvatī and Lakṣmī

1-2. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! Thus saying, the Lord of the World stopped. And Lakṣmī, Gaṅgā and Sarasvatī wept bitterly, embracing one another. All of them then looked to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and gave vent to their feelings one by one with tears in their eyes, and with their hearts throbbing with fears and sorrows.

3-4. Sarasvatī said: 'O Lord! What is the way out of this curse, so severe and paining since our births? How long can helpless women live separated from their husbands? O Lord! I certainly say that I will sacrifice my body when I go to Bhārata, by taking recourse to *yoga*. The Mahātmās always protect all the persons without fail.'

5-6. Gaṅgā said: 'O Lord of the Universe! Why have I been abandoned by You? What fault have I committed? I will quit my body. And You will have to partake of the sin due to the killing of an innocent woman. He is surely to go to hell even if he be the Lord of all, who forsakes in this world an innocent wife.'

7-15. Padmā said: 'O Lord! Thou art of the nature of *sattva-guṇa* in fullness; what wonder, then, how Thou hast become angry! However let Thou be pleased now with Sarasvatī and Gaṅgā. Forgiveness is the best quality of a good husband. I am ready just now to go to Bhārata when Sarasvatī has cursed me. But tell me, how long I will have to stay there? After how many days I shall be able to see again Thy lotus feet? The sinners will wash away their dirts of sins in my waters by their constant baths and ablutions? By what means shall I be freed again and get back to Thy lotus feet? How long shall I have to remain in my part, the daughter of Dharma Dhvaja, at the expiry of which I will be able to see Thee again? How long shall I have to assume the form of Tulasī tree, the abode of Thine? O Thou, the ocean of mercy! Say, when wilt Thou deliver me? And if Gaṅgā have to go to Bhārata, by the curse of Bhārata, when shall She be freed of the curse and sin and when shall She see back Thy feet? Again if Sarasvatī have to go to Bhārata out of Gaṅgā's curse, when will that period of curse expire? How many days after shall She be able to come back to Thy feet? Now, be pleased to cancel Thy order for them to go to Brahmā and Śiva respectively.' O Nārada! Thus speaking to Jagannātha, the Devī Kāmalā bowed down at His feet and embracing them by Her own hairs, cried again and again.

16-37. Now the lotus-navelled Hari, always eager to show favor to the devotees, smiled and with a gracious heart took up Padmā on His breast and said: 'O Sureśvarī! I will keep My own word, also I will act according as you like. O lotus-eyed! Hear how the two ends can be made to meet. Let Sarasvatī go in her one part to have the form of a river and in her one half part to Brahmā and remain with me in Vaikuṇṭha in Her full parts. Gaṅgā will have to go in one part to Bhārata—to purify the three worlds as she

will be urged eagerly to do so by Bhagiratha. And She will remain in her one part in the matted hair of Chandra-śekhara (Mahādeva with Moon on his forehead), obtained with a great difficulty, and so will remain there purer than her natural pure state. And let her remain with Me in full parts. O Padme! O lovely-eyed one! You are most innocent; so part of your part will go to Bhārata and be the Padmāvatī river and you will be the Tulasī tree. After the expiry of five thousand years of Kali-yuga, your curse will expire. Again you all will come to My abode. O Padme! Calamities are the causes of the happiness of the embodied beings. Without dangers no one can understand the true nature of happiness. The saint worshippers of My *mantra* who will perform their ablutions in your water will free you all of your curse by touch and sight. O fair one! By the sight and touch (*darśan-sparśan*) of My *bhaktas* (devotees), all the sacred places of pilgrimages in the world will be purified. For uplifting and sanctifying the holy earth, My *mantropāsakas—śaivas, śaktas, gānapatyas*, etc.—that are devoted to Brahman all are residing in Bhārata. Where My *bhaktas* reside and wash their feet, that place is undoubtedly reckoned as the holy places of pilgrimages. So much so that by the sight and touch of My devotees, the murderer of a woman, of a cow, of a Brāhmaṇa, the treacherous and even the stealer of the wife of his *guru* will be sanctified and liberated while living. Those who do not perform the vow of *ekādaśī*, who do not perform *sandhyās*, who are *nāstikas* (atheists), murderers, all are free of their sins by the sight and touch of My devotees. By the sight and touch of My devotees, those who live on their swords, pens, and the royal officials, the beggars in a village and the Brāhmaṇas who deal in bullocks are also freed of their sins. The traitors, the mischief makers of their friends, those who give false evidence, those that steal other's trust properties, are also freed of their sins by the sight and touch of My devotees. Those who are foul-mouthed, bastards, the husbands and sons of unchaste women are all purified by the sight and touch of My *bhaktas*. The Brāhmaṇa cooks of Śūdras, Brāhmaṇas of an inferior order (who subsist upon the offerings made to the images which he attends), the village mendicants, those who are not initiated by their *gurus*, these all are purified by the sight and touch of My devotees. O fair one! The sins of those persons who do not maintain their fathers, mothers, brothers,

wives, sons, daughters, sisters, the blind, friends, the families of the *gurus*, the fathers-in-law, the mothers-in-law are also removed by the sight and touch of My devotees. Those that cut the Aśvattha trees, that slander My devotees, and the Brāhmaṇas that eat the food of Śūdras are also freed of their sins. Those who steal the Deva's articles, the Brāhmaṇa's articles, those that sell lac, iron, and daughters, those who commit *mahā-pātakas* (*bahmāhatyā, surāpānam, steyam, gurbaṅganāganah, mahānti pātakānyāhuh, tatsam-sargahseha pañchamam*) and those that burn the śūdrā's dead bodies, these also are freed of their respective sins by the sight and touch of My devotees.'

38-42. Mahā-Lakṣmī said: 'O Thou gracious to faithful attendants! What are the characteristics, the marks of those *bhaktas* of Thine that Thou hast spoken of just now whose sight and touch destroy instantly the Mahāpātakas (five great sins), that are destroyed after a long time by the water of the *tīrthas* and the earthen and stone images of the Gods? The sins of the vilest of men, devoid of Hari-*bhakti*, vain and egoistic, cheats, hvpocrites, slanderers of saints, vicious souls are destroyed by your *bhaktas*, whose touch and oblations sanctify the sacred places of pilgrimages; by the touch of the dust and water of whose feet, the earth is purified; whom the *bhaktas* of Bhārata always pray to see; and there is nothing higher than meeting those *bhaktas*.'

Sūta said: "O Great Ṛṣi! Thus hearing the words of Mahā-Lakṣmī, the Lord smiled and began to speak about the confidential marks of the *bhaktas:*"

43-54. 'O Lakṣmī! The marks of the *bhaktas* are all mentioned very confidentially in *śrutis* and *Purāṇas*. These are very sanctifying; destructive of sins, giving happiness, devotion, and liberation. These are never to be described to deceitful persons; these are the essences and to be kept hidden. But you are very simple and like my life. I therefore speak to you. Hear. O fair one! All the *Vedas* declare him to be holy and the best of men, in whose ears are pronounced from the mouth of a *guru*, the Viṣṇu-*mantra*. At the very moment of his being born into this world, one hundred generations back of that person, whether they be at that time in heaven or

hell, get instantaneous liberation and if any of them happen to be born then as *jīvas*, they become liberated at once while living and finally get Viṣṇupadam (the feet of Viṣṇu). That mortal is My *bhakta* (devotee) who is full of devotion to Me, who always repeats My glories and acts according to My directions, who hears with all his heart My topics, and hearing which, whose mind dances with joy, whose voice gets choked and tears incessantly flow out from whose eyes, who loses his outward consciousness. Such a man is indeed, My *bhakta*. My *bhaktas* do not long for happiness or *mukti*, or the four states *sālokya, sāyujya, sāmīpya* and *sārṣṭī*, nor the Brahmāhood, nor the Devahood (the state of immortality); they want only to do *sevā* (service) to Me, and they are solely intent on doing this. Even in dreams they do not desire the Indraship, Manuship, the state of Brahmā so very difficult to be had; nor do they want the enjoyment of kingdoms and heavens. My *bhaktas* roam in Bhārata, eager to hear My glories, and always very glad to recite My sweet glorious deeds. The birth of such *bhaktas* in Bhārata is very rare. They purify the world and go ultimately to My abode, the best of all *tīrthas* (sacred places). Thus I have spoken, O Padme! all that you wanted to hear. Now do as you like.' Then Gaṅgā and others all went to obey the order of Srī Hari, Who went to His own abode."

Here ends the Seventh Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the curses Gaṅgā, Sarasvatī, and Lakṣmī and the way to freedom thereof in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VIII—the Greatness of Kali-yuga

1-110. Nārāyaṇa said: "A part of Sarasvatī descended in this Bhārata Punya Bhūmi (land of merits), owing to the curse of Gaṅgā; and She remained in full in Viṣṇu's region, the abode of Vaikuṇṭha. She is named Bhāratī, on account of Her coming to Bhārata; she is called Brāhmī because she is dear to Brahmā; and She is called Vānī as She presides over speech. Hari is seen everywhere, in tanks, in wells, in running streams (*saras*). Because He resides in *saras*, therefore He is called Sarasvān. Vānī is the Śakti of that

Sarasvān; therefore She is denominated Sarasvatī. The river Sarasvatī is a very sacred *tīrtha*. She is the burning fire to the fuel of sins, of sinners. O Nārada! Through the curse of Sarasvatī, the Devī Gaṅgā also assumed the form of a river in part. She was brought down to this earth at the request of Bhagīratha. Hence she is called Bhāgirathī. While Gaṅgā was rushing down to the earth, Śiva, capable of bearing the great rush of Her, held Her on His head at the request of Mother Earth. Lakṣmī also, through the curse of Sarasvatī came in part of parts to Bhārata as the river Padmāvatī. But She remained in full with Hari. Lakṣmī appeared also in Her other part as the well-known daughter Tulasī of the king Dharmadhvaja in India. Last of all, through Bhāratī's curse and by the command of Śrī Hari, she turned into the Tulasī tree, purifying the whole world. Remaining for five thousand years of Kali-yuga, all them will quit their river appearances and go back to Hari. By the command of Śrī Hari, all the *tīrthas* save Kāsī and Bindrāban will go along with them to Vaikuṇṭha. Next at the expiry of the ten thousand years of Kali, *śālagrāma-śilā* (the stone worshipped as Nārāyaṇa) Śiva, and Śiva-Śakti and Purusottama Jagannātha will leave the soil of Bhārata and go to their respective places, (i.e. the Māhātmyas of those will be extinct from Bhārata). There will then cease to be the saints of Śiva-śākta, Gānapatya and Vaiṣṇava sects, (eighteen) *Purāṇas*, the blowing of conch shells (auspicious signs), *śrāddhas*, *tarpanas* and all the rites and ceremonies dictated by the *Vedas*. The worship and glorification of the gods, the recitation of their praises, even their names will be extinct. The *Vedas* with their *aṅgas* will no longer be heard of. All these will disappear with them. The assembly of the *sādhus*, the true *dharma*, the four *Vedas*, the village Devas and Devīs, *vratas* (vows), practice of the austerities, fasting, all will disappear. All will be addicted to the Vāmāchāra ritual (the left- hand ritual Tāntrik form of worship; sarcastically used in the sense of drinking wine and eating flesh, etc.). They will speak falsehood and be deceitful. If anybody worships, his worship will be void of Tulasī leaves. Almost all will be deceitful, cruel, vain, egoistic, thievish and mischievous. Men will be at variance with one another; women will be at variance with one another; no fear will exist in marriage ties. Properties will be only of those that will make them (i. e. there will cease to be any inheritance from father

to son and so forth). Husbands will be obedient to their wives; unchaste women will be in every house. Wives will rebuke their husbands by incessant noising and chiding. Wives will be the sole mistresses of houses and husbands will stand before them as servants with folded palms. Fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law will be their servants. The brothers of wives and their friends will be the managers of the household affairs. But there will be no friendship with one's own class fellows. The brothers and friends of the house owners (masters of the house) will appear quite strangers as if they are newcomers. Without the command of the housewives, the masters of the houses will be unable to do anything. The divisions of caste (Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra) will entirely disappear. Far from practicing *sandhyā-vandanam* and other daily practices, the Brāhmaṇas will cease even to keep the holy threads on their bodies. The four color-classes will practice the doings of the Mlecchas, read the *śāstras* of the Mlecchas and forsake their own *śāstras*. The Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, and Vaiśyas will become the slaves of Śūdras; will become their cooks, runners and carriers of buffaloes. Everyone will be devoid of truth. Earth will not yield any grains; trees will not yield any fruits and women will be issueless. The cows will not yield milk; even if there be a little milk, ghee will not come out of it. The affection between husband and wife will die out, and the families will be devoid of truth. The King will not wield any power; the subjects will be overburdened with taxes. The ever-flowing big rivers, the petty streams, the caves of mountains all will gradually have very little water in them. The four *varṇas* will be devoid of *dharma* and *puñya* (merit and virtue). One in a *lakh* may be virtuous; afterwards that too will cease. Men, women, boys, all will be ugly and deformed. They will utter bad words and vile sounds. Some villages and towns will be completely deserted by men and will look terrible; at some others few cottages with few inhabitants will be seen. Villages and towns will become jungles, and the jungles will become filled with men. The inhabitants of the forests will become heavily taxed and disconsolate. The beds of rivers and lakes will become dry owing to want of rains, and will be cultivated. The Kulīnas of high families will become very low. The whole earth will be filled with liars, untruthful cheats and hypocrites. The lands, though

cultivated well, will yield grains only in name. Those who are well known as the millionaires, they will become poor and those who are devoted to the Devas will be atheists. The townfolk will have no trace of mercy; rather they will hate and envy their neighbours and turn out murderers of men. In the Kali age, males and females everywhere will be of a dwarfish stature, diseased, short-lived, and of very little youthful virility. The hairs will turn out grey no sooner the people reach their sixteenth year. And they will be very old when they become twenty years old. The girls of eight years will have menstruation and will become pregnant. They will deliver every year. Old age will attack them when they become sixteen years old. Some women will have their husbands and children living. Otherwise almost all will be barren, childless. The four *varṇas* will sell their daughters. The paramours of the mothers, wives, son's wives, daughters, and sisters will be the source of support to them all. No one will be able, without money, to collect the merits by repeating the name of Hari. Persons will make gifts for name and fame, and ultimately will take back what they had made as gifts. If there be any gifts made by one's own self or by one's forefathers or for a Deva purpose or for Brāhmaṇas or for the families of the *gurus*, there will not be found wanting attempts to take back those gifts. Some will go to daughters, some to mothers-in-law, some to the wives of sons, some to sisters, some to mothers of co-wives, some will go to the brother's wives. In every house, those who are unfit to be mixed will be mixed with, excepting one's mother. In Kali-yuga, who is whose wife? And who is whose husband? There will be no certainty; who is whose subject and what village is to whom? There will be no surety that such a property belongs to such-and-such a man. All will turn out to be liars, licentious, thieves, envious of other's wives and murderers of men. In the houses of the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, the three higher castes, the current of sin will flow. They will live by selling lac, iron, and salts prohibited by the *śāstras*. The Brāhmaṇas will drive buffaloes, burn the dead bodies of the Śūdras, eat the food of the Śūdras and go to unchaste women. There will be no more faith existing in the five Ṛṣi Yajñas. Almost every Brāhmaṇa will not observe the vows of *amāvasyā-niśipālana*. The holy threads will be cast away, and the *sandhyā-vandanam*, cleanliness and good practices will cease altogether. The

unchaste women who deal in giving loans, etc., and live on interests and the procuresses during menstruation will cook in Brāhmaṇa families. There will be no distinction of food, no distinction of wombs, no distinction of *āśramas*, and no distinction of persons. All will turn out Mlecchas.

O Nārada! Thus, when the Kali will have its full play, the whole world will be filled with Mlecchas, the trees will be one hand high and the men will be of the size of a thumb. Then the most powerful Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa will incarnate in His part in the house of a Brāhmaṇa named Viṣṇujaśā as his son. Mounted on a long horse, holding a long sword He will make the world free of the Mlecchas in three nights. Then he will disappear from the face of the Earth and She will be without any sovereign and be filled with robbers. There will be incessant rain for six nights, and it will rain and rain until the whole earth will be deluged; no traces of men, houses, and trees. After this the Twelve Suns will rise simultaneously and by their rays the whole water will be dried up and the earth will become level.

Thus the dreadful Kali-yuga will pass away when the Satya-yuga will come back, *tapasyā* and the true religion and *sattva-guṇa* will prevail again. The Brāhmaṇas will practice *tapasyā*, they will be devoted to *dharma* and the *Vedas*.

The women will be chaste and religious in every house. Again the wise and intelligent Kṣatriyas devoted to the Brāhmaṇas will occupy the royal thrones and their might, devotion to Dharma and love for good deeds will increase. The Vaiśyas will again go on with their trade and their devotion to their trade and the Brāhmaṇas will be reestablished. The Śūdras, too, again will be virtuous, and serve the Brāhmaṇas. Again the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas and their families will have *bhakti* towards the Devī, be initiated in Devī *mantras* and all will meditate on the Devī. Again there will be spread the knowledge of the *Vedas*, the *Smṛtis* and the *Purāṇas*, all will go to their wives in menstruation periods. No *adharma* (unrighteousness) will exist and the *dharma* will reign in full, with all the parts (*kalās*) complete.

When the Tretā-yuga comes, the Dharma will be three-footed; when the Dvāpara-yuga will come, the Dharma will be two-footed and when Kali will begin, the Dharma will be one-footed, and when Kali will reign supreme, no Dharma will exist, even in name.

O Nārada! Now I will speak of time. The seven days of the week, Sunday, etc., the sixteen *tithis*, Pratipada etc., the twelve months Vaiśākha etc., the six seasons Summer, etc., the two fortnights (dark and bright) and the two *ayanas* (Northern and Southern) are rendered in vogue. One day consists of four *praharas*, one night consists of four *praharas;* a day and a night constitute one so-called day. Thirty such days make one month. In the computation of time, five kinds of years (*varṣas*) were already mentioned in the 8th Skandha. As the Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali roll on turn by turn, so the days, months and years also roll on in turn. One day according to the Devas, is equal to one year according to men; three hundred and sixty human Yugas equal to one Divya-Yuga. Seventy-one Divya-Yugas make one Manvantara. The life period of Indra, the Lord of Śachī, is one Manvantara. Twenty-eight Indras' lives equals one day of Hiraṇyagarbha (the golden-wombed) Brahmā. 108 such years equal to the life of one Brahmā. When this Brahmā dies, there is the *prākrita-pralaya*. The earth is not visible then. The dissolution of Prakṛti takes place. The whole *Brahmanda* is deluged by water; Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara and the other wise Ṛṣis get dissolved in Para-Brahman, whose substance is all truth and consciousness. That time, the Prakṛti Devī, too, gets merged in Para-Brahman. The fall of Brahmā and the dissolution of Prakṛti are called the *prākrita-pralaya*. The duration of this *pralaya* is one *nimesa* of Para-Brahman Mūla-Prakṛti united with Māyā. All the *Brahmandas* (universes) are destroyed at this time. When this *nimesa* expires, the creation begins again in due order.

So one cannot count the endless numbers of times when this creation and dissolution work are going on. So who can tell how many *kalpas* had passed away, or how many *kalpas* will come, how many *Brahmandas* were created or how many *Brahmandas* will be created? Who will be able to count

how many Brahmās, how many Viṣṇus or how many Maheśvaras there have been? But one and only one Para-Brahman Parameśvara (the Great God) is The Supreme Lord of these countless Brahmandas. The Parameśvara of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss is the highest spirit of all. All others—Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara the Great Virāt, the Smaller Virāt—all are His parts. This Brahman is Mūlā-Prakṛti and from That has appeared Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of his left half which is woman (Ardha-NārĪśvara). It is She that divided Herself into two forms; in Her one form, She resides as the two-armed Kṛṣṇa in the region of Goloka; and as the four-armed Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṇṭha. All the things from Brahmā, the highest, to the mere grass the lowest, all are originated from Prakṛti. And all the Prakṛti-born things are transient. Thus the true, eternal Para-Brahman, beyond the three *guṇas*, the source of all creation, Whose substance is all-will, is the only substance beyond the region of Prakṛti. He is without *upādhis* (conditions, as time, space, causation and attributes); He is without any form; and the forms that He assumes, are for showing His Grace to the devotees only. The lotus-born Brahmā is able by His power of knowledge to create the *brahmanda*. It is by His grace that Śiva, the Lord of the *yogīs* is named Mṛtyumjaya (the conqueror of death), the destoyer of all, and the knower of all *tattvas*. By His *tapas*, Śiva has realized Para-Brahman and therefore has become the Lord of all, all-knowing, endowed with great *vibhūtis* (lordly powers), the seer of all, omnipresent, the protector of all, the bestower of all prosperities. The devotion and service towards Para-Brahman have alone made Śrī Viṣṇu the Lord of all; and it is through the power of Para-brahman, that Mahāmāyā Prakṛti Devī has become omnipotent and the Goddess of all. Bhagavatī Durgā has got His grace by Her devotion and service to Him, and has become Mūla-Prakṛti of the nature of being, consciousness and bliss. And so has the Devī Sāvitrī, the Mother of the *Vedas*, become the presiding deity of the *Vedas,* and She is worshipped by the Brāhmaṇas and the knowers of the *Vedas*. That She presides over all branches of knowledge, is worshipped by all the learned assemblies and by the whole Universe is the result only of worshipping the Prakṛti Devī. That Lakṣmī has become the bestower of all wealth and the presiding Deity of all the villages and the mistress of all, worshipped by all

and the bestower of sons to all, is also the result of worshipping Her. Thus it is through the worship of Prakṛti that Durgā, the destroyer of all calamities and troubles, has appeared from the left side of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; Rādhā has become the presiding deity of His *prāṇa* (vital airs), and She is worshipped by all and possessed of all knowledge. It is by the worship of Śakti that Rādhikā has so much excelled in love, has become the presiding deity of the *prāṇa* of Kṛṣṇa, has got love and respect, has been placed on His breast and is exceedingly beautiful. With the object of getting Kṛṣṇa for her husband, She practiced severe austerities for one thousand Deva years on the mountain Śataśṛṅga in Bhārata to get Mūla-Prakṛti's grace. And when the Śakti, Mūla-Prakṛti became graciously pleased towards Her, Śrī Kṛṣṇa seeing Rādhikā increasing in beauty like the crescent Moon, took Her to His breast and out of tenderness wept and granted Her the highest boons so very rare to others and said: 'O beautiful one! You better remain always on My breast and devoted to Me amongst all My wives; let you be superior to them all in good fortune, respect, love and glory. From today you are my greatest best wife. I will love you as the best amongst them all. O Dear! Always I will be submissive to you and fulfil what you say.' Thus saying, Śrī Kṛṣṇa selected her as his wife without any co-wives and made Her dear to His Heart. The other Devīs besides the five Prakṛtis, already mentioned, also derived superiorities by serving Mūla-Prakṛti.

O Muni! What shall I say, everyone reaps the fruits as he practices *tapasyā*. Bhagavati Durgā practiced *tapasyā* on the Himālyās for one thousand Deva years and meditated on the lotus feet of Mūla-Prakṛti, and so has come to be worshipped by all. The Devī Sarasvatī practiced *tapasyā* for one *lakh* Deva years and is come to be respected by all. The Devilakṣmī practiced *tapasyā* at Puṣkara for one hundred Divine Yugas and, by the Grace of Mūla-Prakṛti has become the bestower of wealth to all. The Devī Savitrī worshipped Śakti for sixty thousand divine years in the Malaya mountain and is respected and worshipped by all. O Vibhu! Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara worshipped Śakti for one hundred Manvantaras and so have become the preservers, etc., of this world. Śrī Kṛṣṇa practiced terrible austerities for ten Manvantaras and therefore obtained his position in the

region of Goloka and is remaining there today in greatest bliss. Dharma Deva worshipped Śakti with devotion for ten Manvantaras and has become the lives of all, worshipped by all, and the receptacle of all. O Muni! Thus all, whether the Devīs, Devas, Munis, Kings, Brāhmaṇas, all have got their respect in this world by the worship of Śakti. O Devarṣi! I have thus described to you all that I heard from the mouth of my *guru*, in accordance with the rules of the *Vedas.* What more do you want to hear?"

Here ends the Eighth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the Greatness of Kali in the Mahā Purāṇam Srīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IX—Origin of the Śakti of the Earth

1-4. Śrī Nārada said: "In the twinkling of an eye of the Devī, the *pralaya* takes place; and in that very time also the *brahmāṇḍa* (cosmos) is dissolved, which is called the *pralaya* of Prakṛti. During this *pralaya*, the Devī Vasundharā (Earth) disappears; the whole world is deluged with water and all this appearance of five elements called *prapañcha* vanishes in the body of Prakṛti. Now where does Vasundharā (Earth), thus vanished, reside? And how does She again appear at the beginning of the creation? What is the cause of her being so much blessed, honored and capable to hold all and victorious. So tell about Her birth, the source of all welfare."

5-23. Śrī Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! So it is heard that the Earth appears at the very outset of the creation. Her appearance and disappearance so occur in all the *pralayas*. This earth, the maṇifestation of the great Śakti, sometimes becomes maṇifest in Her and sometimes remains latent in Her (the Śakti). It is all the will of that great Śakti. Now hear the anecdote of the appearance (birth) of the earth, the cause of all good, the source of destruction of all calamities, the destroyer of sin and the cause of furtherance of one's religious merits. Some say that this earth has come out of the marrow of the Daityas, Madhu and Kaitabha; but that is not the fact. Hear now the real fact. Those two Daityas were greatly pleased with Viṣṇu's valor and prowess in the fight between them and Viṣṇu; and they

said: “Kill us on that part of the earth which is not under water.” From their words it is evident that the earth was existent during their lifetime but she was not visible. After their death, the marrow came out of their bones. Now hear how the name Medinī came to be applied to the earth. She was taken out of the water, and the marrow came to be mixed with the earth. It is on account of this mixing that she is called Medinī, Now I will tell you what I heard before in Puṣkara, the sacred place of pilgrimage, from the mouth of Dharma Deva, about the origin of earth, approved by the *śrutis*, consistent, and good. Hear.

When the mind of Mahā-Virāt, merged in water, expanded all over his body, it entered into every pore of his body. Next the Mahāprithvī or the Great Earth appeared at the time of *pañchī-karana* (mixing of one-half of each of the elements with one-eighth of each of the other four elements). This Mahāprithvī was broken into pieces and placed in every pore. It is this differentiated earth that appears during creation and disappears during *pralaya*. From this mind, concentrated in every pore of the body of Mahā-Virāt, is born this earth, after a long interval. In every pore in the skin of this Virāt Puruṣa there is one earth. She gets maṇifested and she disappears. This occurs again and again. When she appears, she floats on the water; and when she disappears, she gets merged in the water. There is this earth (world) in every universe; and along with her, there are mountains, forests, seven oceans, seven islands, Sumeru mountain, the Moon, the Sun and other planets, Brahmaloka, Viṣṇuloka (the abode of Viṣṇu) Śivaloka and the regions of the other Devas, sacred places of pilgrimage, the holy land of Bhāratavarṣa, the Kānchanī Bhūmi, seven heavens, seven Pātālas or nether regions, on the above Brahmaloka, and Dhruvaloka. This law holds good in every world in every universe. So every universe is the work of Māyā and thus it is transient. At the dissolution of Prakṛti, Brahmā falls. Again when creation takes place, the Mahā-Virāt appears from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Spirit. Eternal is this flow of creation, preservation and destruction; eternal is this flow of time, *kasthā;* eternal is this flow of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa, etc. And eternal is this flow of Vasundharā who is worshipped in the Vārāha-kalpa by the Suras,

Munis, Vipras, Gandharvas, etc. The *śruti* says that the presiding Deity of this eternal earth is the wife of Viṣṇu in His boar-form. Maṅgala (Mars) is the son of that earth and Maṅgala's son is Ghateśa."

24-26. Nārada said: "In what form was the Earth worshipped by the Devas in Vārāha-kalpa? The Vārāhi, the receptacle of all things, moving and non-moving, how did She appear, by what method of Pañchī-karana, from the Mūla-Prakṛti? What is the method of Her worship in this Bhūrloka and in the heavens (Svarloka)? Also tell me, O Lord! in detail, the auspicious birth of Maṅgala (Mars)."

27-34. Nārāyaṇa spoke: "In ancient days, in the Vārāha-kalpa, Varāha Deva (the boar incarnation) when entreated and praised by Brahmā, killed the Daitya Hiraṇyākṣa and rescued the earth from the nether regions Rasātala. He then placed the earth on the waters, where she floated as a lotus leaf floats on water. In the meantime Brahmā began to fashion the wonderful creation on the surface of the earth. Bhagavān Hari, in His boar form and brilliant like ten million suns, saw the beautiful and lovely appearance of the presiding deity of the earth, possessed of amorous sentiments. He then assumed a very beautiful form, fit for amorous embraces. They then held their sexual intercourse and it lasted day and night for one Deva year. The beautiful Earth, in the pleasant amorous plays, fainted away; for the intercourse of the lover with the beloved is exceedingly pleasant. And Viṣṇu, too, at the same time was very much exhausted by the pleasant touch of the body of the Earth. He did not become conscious even how days and nights passed away. When full one year passed away, they got back their senses and the amorous man then left his hold of the beloved. He assumed easily his former Boar form and worshipped Her as the incarnation of the Devī with incense, lights, offerings of food, with vermilion (*sindur*, red powder), sandalwood-paste, garments, flowers and various other offerings of food, etc. He then said:

35-37. 'O Auspicious One! Let Thou beest the receptacle of all things. All the Munis, Manus, Devas, Siddhas, and Dānavas, etc., will worship Thee with pleasure and willingness. On the day the *ambuvāchi* ceremony closes,

on the day when the house construction, i.e., the foundation is laid, on the day when the first entry is made into the newly built houses, when the digging of the well or tank commences, and on the day when untiling the ground commences, all will worship Thee. Those stupid fools that will not observe this, will certainly go to hell.'

38-41 The Earth spoke: 'O Lord! By Thy command I will assume the form of Vārāhī (female boar) and support easily on my back this whole world of moving and non-moving things, but the following things, pearls, small shells, *śālagrām*, (a black stone, usually round, found in the river Gandakī, and worshipped as a type of Viṣṇu), the phallus or emblem of Śiva, the images of the goddesses, conchshells, lamps (lights), the *yantras*, gems, diamonds, the sacred *upanayana* threads, flowers, *skandhas*, the Tulasī leaves, the japa-mālā, the garland of flowers, gold, camphor, *gorochanā* (bright yellow pigment prepared from the urine or bile of a cow), sandalwood, and the water after washing the *śālagrāma* stone, I will not be able to bear. I will be very much pained in case I were to bear these on Me.'

42-45. Śrī Bhagavān said: 'O fair one! The fools that will place the above articles on Thy back will go to the Kālasutra hell for one hundred divine years.' O Nārada! Thus saying, Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa remained silent. Now the Earth became pregnant and the powerful planet Mars was born. By the command of Śrī Hari, all began to meditate on Earth according to what is mentioned in *Kānva-śākhā* and began to praise Her. Offerings of food were given, uttering the root-*mantra*. Thus became extant all over the three worlds Her worship and praise."

46. Nārada said: "O Bhagavān! Very sacred is the meditation, hymn and the root-*mantra* of the Earth. I am very anxious to hear them. Kindly describe it in detail."

47-48. Nārāyaṇa said: "The Earth was first worshipped by Varāha Deva; next She was worshipped by Brahmā. Next She was worshipped by all the Munis, Devas, Manus and men. O Nārada! Now hear the *dhyāna*, praise and *mantra* of the Devī Earth.

49-51. The Earth was first worshipped by Bhagavān Viṣṇu with this root mantra (*mūla-mantra*) ***āūṁ hṛīṁ śrīṁ klīṁ vasundharāyai svāhā***. Next He said: 'O Devī Earth! O Thou smiling one! I worship Thee, who art worshipped by the three worlds, whose color is white like white lotus, whose face is beautiful like the autumnal moon, who art the storehouse of all gems and jewels, and in whose womb all precious stones and pearls are inbedded, and who has put on a raiment purified by fire.' All then began to worship Her with this *mantra*."

52-63. Śrī Nārāyaṇa said: "Now hear the hymn sung before Her according to *Kānva-śākhā:* 'O Thou, the giver of victory! Holder of water! Endowed with water, full of victory; consort of the boar incarnation, carrier of victory! Bestow victory on me. O Thou auspicious one! The storehouse of all good, O Thou incarnate of all auspiciousness! Bestower of good, Thou, the source of all good to bestow all sorts of welfare! Bestow all things that are good and auspicious to me in this world.

O Thou! The receptacle of all, the knower of all, all powerful, the bestower of all desires, O Devī Earth! Give me the fruits that I desire.

O Thou! Who art all merits, Thou, the seed of all religious merits, O Thou, the eternal, the receptacle of all religious merits, the home of all religious persons, Thou bestowest merits to all.

O Thou! The storehouse of all grains, enriched with all sorts of corn, Thou bestowest harvests to all; Thou takest away all the grains in this world and again, Thou producest all corns of various kinds here. O Earth! Thou art all-in-all to the landlords, the best source of refuge and happiness. O bestower of lands! Give me lands.'

The above hymn yields great religious merits. He who rising early in the morning reads this *stotra,* becomes the sovereign of the whole earth for millions and millions of births. Men who read this acquire merits due to giving away lands as gifts. People certainly become freed of their sins, if they read this *stotra*—even those who take back lands after making them as

gifts, who dig earth on the day of *ambuvāchī*, who dig wells without permission on another's land, who steal other's lands, who throw their semen on earth, who place lamps on the earth. Religious merits equivalent to one hundred horse sacrifices accrue from reading this *stotra*. There is no doubt about this. This *stotra* of the great Devī is the source of all sorts of welfare and auspiciousness."

Here ends the Ninth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the origin of the Śakti of the earth in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter X—Offenses to the Earth and Punishments Thereof

1-3. Nārada said: "I am now desirous to hear about the merits acquired by making gifts of land, the demerits in stealing away lands, digging wells in other's wells, in digging earth on the day of *ambuvāchī*, in casting semen on earth, and in placing lamps and lights on the surface of the earth, as well the sins when one acts wrongly in various other ways on the surface of the earth, and the remedies thereof."

4-30. Śrī Nārāyaṇa said: "If one makes a gift of land in this Bhārata of the measure of a *vitasti* (a long span measured by the extended thumb and little finger) to a Brāhmaṇa who performs *sandhyā* three times a day and is thus purified, one goes and remains in Śiva-loka (the abode of Śiva). If one gives away in charity a land full of corn to a Brāhmaṇa, the giver goes and lives in Viṣṇu-loka in the end for a period measured by the number of dust particles in the land. If one presents a village, a plot of land, or grains to a Brāhmaṇa, both the giver and the receiver become freed of their sins and go to the Devī-loka (the abode of the Devī). Even if one be present when a proposal for a gift of land is being made and says, "This act is good," one goes to Vaikuṇṭha with one's friends and relatives. He remains in the Kālasutra hell as long as the Sun and Moon exist, who takes back or steals away a gift to a Brāhmaṇa offered by himself or by any other. Even his sons, grandsons, etc. become destitute of lands, prosperity, sons, and wealth and remain in a dreadful hell named Raurava. If one cultivates the

grazing land for the cows and reaps therefrom a harvest of grains, one remains for one hundred divine years in the Kumbhīpāka hell. If one cultivates any enclosure for cows or tanks and grows grains on them, one remains in the Asipatra hell for a period equivalent to fourteen Indra's falls. One who bathes in another's tank without taking off five handfuls of earth from it, goes to hell and one's bath is quite ineffectual. If anybody, out of his amorous passion casts his semen privately on the suface of the ground, he will have to suffer the torments of hell for as many years as are the numbers of dust particles on that area. If anyone digs ground on the day of *ambuvāchī*, one remains in hell for four *yugas*. If, without the permission of the owner of a well or tank, a stupid man clears the old well or tank and digs the slushy earth from the bottom, his labor goes in vain. The merit goes to the real owner. And the man who labored so much goes to Tapta Kuṇḍa Naraka for fourteen Indra's lifetimes. If anyone takes out five handfuls of earth from another's tank, when he goes to bathe in it, he dwells in Brahmā-loka for a period of years amounting to the number of particles in those handfuls of earth. During one's father's or grandfather's *śrāddha* ceremony, if one offers *piṇḍa* without offering any food (*piṇḍa*) to the owner of the soil, the *śrāddha* performer certainly goes to hell. If one places a light (*pradīpa*) directly on the earth without any holding piece at the bottom, one becomes blind for seven births; and so if one places a conchshell (*śankha*) on the ground, one becomes attacked with leprosy in one's next birth. If any body places pearls, gems, diamonds, gold and jewels, the five precious things on the ground he becomes blind, if one places the phallic emblem of Śiva, the image of Śivāni, the *śālagrāma* stone on the ground, he remains for one hundred Manvantaras to be eaten by worms. Conchshells, *yantras* (diagrams for Śakti worshippers), the water after washing *śilas* (*charanāmrita*) flowers, Tulasī leaves, if placed on the ground, lead him who places these, verily to hells. The beads, garlands of flowers, *gorochana* (a bright yellow pigment prepared from the urine or bile of a cow), and camphor, when placed on the ground, lead him who places so to suffer the torments of hell. Sandalwood, Rudrākṣa-mālā, and the roots of Kuśa grass also, if placed on the ground, lead the doer to stay for one *manvantara* in the hell. *Skandhas*, the sacred *upanayana* threads, when placed

on the ground make the doers unfit for Brāhmaṇa birth; rather he is involved in a sin equivalent to the murder of a Brāhmaṇa. The sacred *upanayana* thread when knotted and rendered fit for holding, is worth being worshipped by all the castes. One ought to sprinkle the earth with curd, milk, etc., after one has completed one's sacrifices. If one fails to do this, one will have to remain for seven births in a hot ground with great torment. If one digs the earth when there is an earthquake or when there is an eclipse, that sinner becomes also devoid of some of his limbs in his next birth. O Muni! This earth is named Bhūmi since She is the abode of all; she is named Kāśyapī since she is the daughter of Kaśyapa; is named Viśvambharā, since she supports the Universe; She is named Ananta, since she is endlessly wide; and She is named Prithivī since she is the daughter of the King Pṛthu, or she is extensively wide."

Here ends the Tenth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the offenses caused towards the surface of the earth and punishments thereof in hells, in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XI—Origin of the Ganges

1-3. Devaṛṣi Nārada said: "O Thou, the foremost of the knowers of the *Vedas!* I have heard the excellent narration of Earth. Now I want to hear the anecdote of Gaṅgā. I heard, ere long, that Gaṅgā, of the nature of Viṣṇu and appearing from the feet of Viṣṇu, the Īśvarī of the Devas, appeared, due to the curse of Bhāratī, on Bhārata; why has she come to Bhārata; in which *yuga* and asked by whom did she come to Bhārata? O Lord! Now describe to me this auspicious anecdote capable to destroy sins and yield religious merits."

4-38. Nārāyaṇa said: "O child! In ancient days there was born a prosperous Emperor, King of Kings, in the Solar dynasty. He had two beautiful wives; one was named Vaidarbhī, and the other was named Śaivyā. Śaivyā delivered a very lovely son; his name was Asamanjā. On the other hand, the queen Vaidarbhī desirous of getting a son, worshipped Śaṅkara the

Lord of Bhūtas, who became pleased and granted her request; and Vaidarbhī became pregnant. After one hundred years of pregnancy she gave birth to one mass of flesh. Seeing this, the queen became very afflicted and taking refuge of Mahādeva, began to cry loudly and very often. Bhagavān Śaṅkara, then, appeared there in a Brāhmaṇa form and cut that mass of flesh into thousand pieces. Those thousand pieces turned out into thousand very powerful sons. Their bodies looked more brillant than the midday sun. But they were all burnt to ashes by the curse of Kapila Muni. And the King began to lament bitterly and he entered into the forest. Asamajā practiced *tapasyā* to bring the Gaṅgā for one *lakh* years, when he quit his body in course of time. His son Amśumān practiced *tapasyā* for one *lakh* years to bring Gaṅgā unto Bhārata and he, too, died. Then the son of Amsumān, the intelligent Bhagīratha, a great devotee of Viṣṇu, free of old age and death and the store of many qualifications, practiced *tapasyā* for one *lakh* years to bring Gaṅgā on earth. At last he saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa, brilliant like ten million summer suns. He had two hands; there was a flower in His hand; be was full of youth in the dress of a cowherd. A sight of His Gopāla Sundarī form, wearing a Sakhī's dress, makes one think that He is ever-ready to show grace on His devotees. He is Para-brahman, whose substance is will; be has no deficiencies. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara and the other Devas and Munis, etc. all praise Him who pervades everywhere. He is not concerned with anything; yet He is the witness of all. He is beyond the three *guṇas*, higher than Prakṛti. A sweet smile is always in his face, which makes it the more lovely. There is none equal to him in showing grace to the *bhaktas*. His raiment is purified, uninflammable by fire, and He is decorated with gems, jewels and ornaments. King Bhagīratha saw that unforeseen appearance, bowed down and began to praise Him over and over again. His whole body was filled with ecstasy. Then he clearly told what he wanted for the deliverance of his family. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa then, addressed Gaṅgā and said:

'O Sureśvarī! Go quickly and appear in Bhārata, under the curse of Bhāratī. By My command go quickly and purify the sons of Sagara. They will all be purified by the touch of the air in contact with the Ganges and rise up in

divine aerial cars, assuming forms like Mine and they will come to My abode. They will there remain always as My attendants and will not be involved in the sins that they committed in their previous births.'

O Nārada! It is stated in the *Vedas* that if the human souls, taking their births in Bhārata, commit sins for millions and millions of births, the sins will be completely destroyed if they touch once the air in contact with and carrying the particles of the Ganges. The sight of the Ganges and the touch of the Ganges water give religious merits ten times more than the touch with the air in contact with the Ganges water. People become freed of their sins then and there, especially if they bathe in the Ganges. It is heard in the *śrutis* that bathing in the Ganges, if done according to rules, destroys all the sins—the murder of a Brāhmaṇa—acquired in one thousand million births, done consciously or unconsciously. The merits acquired by bathing in the Ganges on a day of religious merit cannot be described even by the *Vedas*. Whatever is mentioned in the *āgamas* is but a mere trifle. Even Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa cannot describe fully the merits of the bathing in the Ganges. O Brāhmaṇa! Such is the glory of ordinary bathing.

Now I will describe the effect of the Ganges bath done with a *saṅkalpa* (resolve); hear. Ten times more the result is obtained when the Ganges bathing is done with *saṅkalpa* than ordinary bath, and if one bathes on the day when the sun passes from one Zodiac sign to another, thirty times more religious merits accrue. On the new Moon (*amāvyasa*) day, the Ganges bath gives the merits as above mentioned; but when the Sun is in his Southern course (*dakśiṇāyana*), double the merits are obtained; and when the sun is in his Northern course (*uttarāyana*), ten times more religious merits are obtained. The Ganges bathing in the time of *cāturmāsya*, full Moon day, *aksayā-navamī* or *aksayā-trittīyā* yields merits that cannot be measured. And if on the above *parva* (particular periods of the year on which certain ceremonies are commanded) days, both bathing and making over gifts are done, there is no limit to the religious merits acquired; hundred times more than ordinary bath, religious merits are obtained. Great religious merits accrue from the Ganges bath on Manvantarā-tithi,

Yugādyā, *śuklā* seventh day of the month of Māgha, Bhīsmāstamī day, Aśokāstamī day, and Śrī Rāma Navamī day. Again double the merits than those of the above arise from bathing in the Ganges during the Nandā ceremony. The Ganges bath in the Daśaharā tenth *tithi* gives merits equivalent to *yugādyā-snānam* (bath). And if the bathing be done on Mahānandā or in Mahā-Vāruṇī day, four times more religious merits accrue. Ten million times more religious merits accrue from the Ganges bathing on Mahā-Mahā-Vāruṇī day than ordinary bath. The Ganges bath in the Solar eclipse yields ten times more religious merits than in the Lunar eclipse. Again the *snānam* in Ardhodaya-yoga yields hundred times more religious merits than that of the (solar) eclipse.' Thus saying to Gaṅgā before Bhagīratha, the Lord of the Devas remained silent. The Devī Gaṅgā with her head bowed down with devotion, said:

39-42. 'If I am after all, to go to Bhārata as Thou commandest and under the curse given previously by Bhāratī, then tell me how I would be freed of the sins that the sinners will cast on me. How long will I have to remain there? When, O Lord! Shall I be able to return to the highest place of Viṣṇu? O Thou, the inner self of all! O all-knowing! O Lord! Whatever else I desire, Thou knowest them all. So be pleased to instruct me on all these points.'

43-69. Bhagavān Śrī Hari said: 'O Sureśvarī! I know all that you desire; when you will assume the liquid form, the salt ocean will be your husband. He is My part, and you are of the nature of Lakṣmī; so the union of the lover with the love-stricken in the world will turn out a happy and qualified one. Of all the rivers, Sarasvatī and others in Bhārata, that go to mix with the ocean, you will be the best and highly fortunate of them all. From today you will have to remain in Bhārata for a period of five thousand years, under the curse of Bhāratī. You will be able to enjoy daily and always the pleasures with the ocean. O Devī! As you are a clever lady, so He is also apt and expert. The inhabitants of Bhārata will praise Thee and worship Thee with great devotion by the *stotra* which Bhagīratha has composed. He will derive the fruit of one horse-sacrifice who will meditate on Thee as per Kānva-śākhā and worship, praise and bow down to Thee

daily. Even if one utter "Gaṅgā, Gaṅgā," though one is one hundred *yojanas* away from the Ganges, one will be freed of all sins and go to Viṣṇu-loka. Whatever sins will be cast in Thee by thousand sinners bathing in Thee will be destroyed by the touch of the devotees of Prakṛti-Devī. Even if thousands and thousands of sinners touch the dead bodies and bathe in Thee, all those will be destroyed when the Devī Bhaktas, the worshippers of Bhuvaneśvarī and Māyā-Vīja, will come and touch Thee. O Auspicious One! Thou wilt wash away the sins of the sinners, by Thy stay in Bhārata with other best rivers Sarasvatī and others. That will be at once a sacred place of pilgrimage where Thy glories will be chanted. By the touch of the dust of Thine, the sinner will be at once purified and he will dwell in the Devī-loka (Maṇidvīpa) for as many years as will be the dust there. All hail to the Devī Bhuvaneśvarī! He who will leave his body on Thy lap with full consciousness and remembering My name, will certainly go to My abode and will remain as My chief attendant for an infinite period. He will see countless *prākritik-layas* (dissolutions of the Universe). Unless a man has collected hordes of religious merits, be cannot die on the Ganges; and if he dies on the Ganges he goes to Vaikuṇṭha as long as the Sun rises in this world. I get many bodies for him where he can enjoy the fruits of his *karma* and I then give him My *svārūpya* (form resembling Mine) and make him My attendant. If any ignorant man, void of any *jñāṇam*, quits his body by touching merely Thy water, I give him *sālokya* (place in My region) and make him My attendant. Even if one quits one's body in a far-off place, uttering Thy Name, I give him place in My region for one life time of Brahmā. And if he remembers Thee with devotion, and quits his mortal coil at another place, I give him *sārūpya* (form resembling Mine) for a period of endless *prākritik-layas*. He instantly gets on an aerial car made of jewels, and goes with My attendants to the region of Goloka and gets a form like Me. Those that worship daily My *mantra*, that pass their day eating remnants of the food offered to Me, need not have any distinction whether they die in a *tīrtha* or not. They themselves can easily purify the three worlds. Getting on the excellent and best aerial car built of jewels, they go to the region of Goloka. O chaste one! Even if the friends of My devotees be born in animal births, they also will be purified by the devotion shown

towards Me, and getting on a jewelled aerial car will be able to go to Goloka, so diffcult of access. Wherever the *bhaktas* may be, if they simply remember Me with devotion, they will become liberated while living by the power of My bhakti.'

Thus saying to Gaṅgā, Bhagavān Śrī Hari addressed Bhagīratha: 'O child! Now worship Gaṅgā-Devī with devotion and chant hymns to Her.' The pure Bhagīrata meditated with devotion as per Kauthuma-śākhā, worshipped the Devī and praised Her repeatedly. Then Gaṅgā and Bhagīratha bowed down to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and He disappeared at once from their sight.

70. The Devaṛṣi Nārada said: "O Thou the foremost of the knowers of the *Vedas!* How, by what Kuthuma-śākhā, the noble King Bhagiratha meditated on the Devī Gaṅgā; what *stotra* did he recite, and what was the method with which he worshipped the Ganges?"

71-75. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! One should first take one's bath, and putting on a clean washed clothing should perform one's daily duties. Then one should control oneself and with devotion worship the six Devatās Gaṇeśa, Sun, Fire, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Śivānī. Thus one becomes entitled to worship. First worship is to be given to Gaṇeśa for the destruction of obstacles; the Sun is to be next worshipped for health; Fire, for purification; Viṣṇu is then worshipped for getting wealth and power; Śiva is worshipped for knowledge and Śivānī is worshipped for *mukti*. When these Devatās are worshipped, one is entitled to worship the Deity. Otherwise contrary become the effects. Now I am saying what *dhyānam* (meditation) Bhagīratha practiced towards the Devī Gaṅgā."

Here ends the Eleventh Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the origin of the Ganges in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahāṛṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XII—the Origin of Gaṅgā

1-15. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! Now about the meditation (*dhyāna*) of the Devī Gaṅgā as per *Kānva-śākhā*, which destroys all sins:

> O Gange! Of white color like white lotuses! Thou destroyest all the sins of men. Thou hast appeared from the body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Thou art powerful like Him. Thou art very chaste and pure. Thou hast worn the raiment, uninflammable and decorated all over with ornaments made of jewels. Thou art more brilliant than a hundred autumnal Moons. Thou art also well pleased with a smile on Thy lips. And Thou art always of steady youthful beauty that never wanes. Thou art dear to Nārāyaṇa, calm and of peaceful temper, and proud of being His with His fortune. Thou bearest the braid of hair, decked with garlands of Mālatī flowers; Thy cheeks are anointed with sandal dots, with *sindūra-bindu* (dots of red vermilion) and well adorned with various artistic lines made of musk. Thy garment and Thy beautiful lips are more red than the ripe *bimba* fruit (the red fruit of a cucurbitaceous plant); Thy teeth vie as it were, with rows of pearls. How lovely are Thy eyes! How delightful is Thy sidelong glance! How close are Thy breasts like *bel* fruits! Thy loins are thicker and more solid then the plantain trees. How do Thy feet look beautiful, defying the beauty of the *sthalapadma* (ground Lotus)! How do the red sandals look lovely with *kunkuma* and *alaktak* (red powder)! What a red tinge Thy feet have shown with the honey of Pārijāta flower that is seen on the head of Indra. The Devas, Siddhas and Munis offer always *arghyas* (offerings of rice with *darba* grass) at Thy feet; the ascetics bow down at Thy feet, and it seems as though so many lines of bees are on Thy lotus feet. O Mother! Thy lotus feet give liberation to those that want *mukti* and enjoyment to those that want *bhukti* (enjoyments). O Mother! Thou art the boon; Thou art the chief excellence; Thou grantest boons and Thou showest Thy favor to

> Thy devotees; Thou bestowest the *viṣṇupadam* (the place of Viṣṇu); for Thou hast come from the feet of Viṣṇu.

Thus meditating on the Devī Gaṅgā flowing by three routes (in Heaven, earth and infernal regions), the bestower of good things, one should offer to the Devī sixteen things: *āsana*, *pādya*, *arghya*, water for bathing, ointment (*anūlepana*), *dhūpa* (incense), *dīpa* (lights), *naivedya* (offerings of food), betel, cool water, clothings, ornaments garlands, sandalwood paste, *ācamanaīya* (water for sipping) and beautiful bedding, and worship Her with these. Then with folded hands, one should recite the *stotra* to Her and bow down to Her with devotion. Thus the worshipper gets the fruits of an *aśvamedha* sacrifice."

16. Nārada said: "O Lord of the Devas! At present I am desirous to hear the sin-destroying and virtue-bestowing *stotra* (hymn) of Gaṅgā-Devī, the purifier of all those that are fallen from virtue, who originated from the feet of Viṣṇu, the Lord of world and the husband of Lakṣmī. Kindly narrate all these in detail."

17-41. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! Now I will narrate the *stotra* of Gaṅgā Devī, that destroys all sins and bestows all religious merit. Hear.

> I bow down to the Ganges, who appeared from the body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, enchanted by the music of Śiva, and who was bathed with the perspiration (water coming out of the body) of Śrī Rādhā. I bow down to Gaṅgā Devī who first appeared in the circular dance (*rāsa-māndalam*) in the region of Goloka, and who always remains with Śaṅkara. My obeisance to the Devī Gaṅgā who remains in the auspicious grand *utsav* of Rādhā (*rāsa-māndalam*), crowded with *gopas* and *gopīs*, in the Full Moon night of the month of Kārtik. She is one *koti yojanas* wide and one *lakh* times one *koti yojanas* long in the region of Goloka. My obeisance to Her! In Vaikuṇṭha, Gaṅgā is sixty *lakh yojanas* in width and four times that in length. My obeisance to Her! In Brahmā-loka, Gaṅgā is thirty *lakh yojanas* wide and five times as long. I bow down to Her. In Śiva-loka, She is thirty

> *lakh yojanas* wide and four times that in length. I bow down to Her. In Dhruva-loka, She is one *lakh yojanas* wide and seven times as long. I bow down to Her. In Chandra-loka She is one *lakh yojanas* wide and five times as long. My obeisance to Śrī Gaṅgā Devī. I bow down to the Ganges who is sixty thousand *yojanas* wide in the Sūrya-loka and ten times that in length. I bow down to Gaṅgā in Tapo-loka who is one *lakh yojanas* wide and five times that in length. My obeisance to Gaṅgā Devī in Janar-loka, who is one thousand *yojanas* wide and ten times that as long. I bow down to Gaṅgā in Mahār-loka, who is ten *lakh yojanas* wide and five times that in length. My obeisance to Gaṅgā Devī in Kailāśa who is one thousand *yojanas* wide and one hundred times as long. I bow down to Gaṅgā Devī who is known as Mandākinī in Indra-loka, and who is one hundred *yojanas* wide and ten times than that in length. My obeisance to Gaṅgā Devī, known as Bhogavati in Pātāla, who is ten *yojanas* wide and five times as long. I bow down to Gaṅgā Devī, known as Alakanandā in this earth, who is two miles wide, in some places more wide and in some places less wide. I bow down to Gaṅgā Devī who was of the color of milk in Satya-yuga, of the color of Moon in Tretā Yuga, of the color of white sandalwood paste in Dvāpara-yuga. I bow down to Śrī Gaṅgā Devī who is as water in Kali-yuga in this earth and as milk in Kali-yuga in Heaven. O child! By the touch of one molecule of the water of the Ganges, all the horrible sins incurred in ten million births, the murder of a Brāhmaṇa and so forth, are burnt to ashes.

Thus I have described in twenty-one verses the great *stotra* (hymn) of the sin-destroying and the virtue-increasing merits of Gaṅgā. He reaps the fruit of the Aśvamedha sacrifice (Horse sacrifice), who daily sings this praise of Gaṅgā after worshipping Her with devotion. There is no doubt about this. The persons that are without any sons get sons hereby and those who have no wives get wives. The diseased get themselves free from their diseases, and the man who is under bondage is liberated from that bondage. He who getting up early in the morning reads this *stotra* of Gaṅgā becomes widely

known even if he be not known at all, and he becomes illumined with wisdom even if he be quite ignorant. Even if he sees a bad dream, he acquires the merit of bathing in the Ganges and of seeing good dreams."

42-44. Śrī Nārāyaṇa continued: "O Nārada! With this *stotra* (hymn) did Bhagīratha praise the Gaṅgā-Devī. Who then went with him to the spot where the Sagara's sons were burnt to ashes by the curse of Kapila. By the contact of the wind in touch with the particles of water of the Ganges, those sons of Sagara were instantly freed of their curses and they all repaired to Vaikuṇṭha. She is named Bhāgirathī, because Bhagīratha brought Her to this earth. Thus I have described to you the story of the Ganges.

This anecdote is highly meritorious and the great step to liberation. What more do you now want to hear? Say."

45-46. Nārada said: "O Lord! How did Gaṅgā come to flow through the three worlds by three routes, and thus purify them? How was she carried and to which places? How did the people of those localities accord respect to Her? Kindly describe all these in detail."

47-79. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! On the full-moon night of the month of Kārtik in the *rāsa-māndalam*, at the great festivity in honor of Rādhā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa worshipped Rādhā and remained there. Next Rādhā, worshipped by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, was worshipped by Brahmā and the other Devas, by Saunaka and the other Ṛṣis, who also stopped there with much gladness. At this moment the Devī Sarasvatī, the presiding Deity of the science of music, began to sing lovely songs regarding Kṛṣṇa, in tune with vocal and instrumental music. Brahmā became glad and presented to Sarasvatī a necklace of jewels; Mahādeva gave her gems and jewels rare in this universe; Kṛṣṇa presented the best Kaustubha jewel; Rādhikā offered excellent invaluable necklace of jewels; Nārāyaṇa presented to her the best and most excellent garland of jewels; Lakṣmī gave her invaluable golden earrings decked with gems; Viṣṇu-Māyā Mūla-Prakṛti, Bhagvatī Durgā, who is Nārāyaṇī, Īśvarī, Īśānī, presented Her devotion to Brahman, so very rare; Dharma gave her devotion to *dharma* and high fame; Agṇi (fire) gave

her excellent raiments purified by fire and Vāyu gave Her Nūpura (toe ornaments) made of gems and jewels. At this time, Maheśvara, the Lord of *bhūtas* (elements) began to sing, at the suggestion of Brahmā, songs relating to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's grand *rāsa* festival. Hearing this, the Devas became very much enchanted and remained motionless like statues. With great difficulty, they regained their consciousness. Then they saw that there was no Rādhā nor Kṛṣṇa in this *rāsa-māndala;* everything was deluged with water. The *gopas, gopīs*, Devas and Brāhmaṇas began to cry loudly. Brahmā in his meditation then came to know that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa both have assumed this liquid appearance for the deliverance of the people of the world. Brahmā and others, all began to praise Śrī Kṛṣṇa and said: 'O all-prevading One! Now be pleased to show us Thy form and grant us our desired boons.' At that instant a sweet incorporeal voice was clearly heard by all, as coming from air above, that, 'I am the Self of all, pervading all; and this my Śakti, Rādhā, is also the Self of all, prevades all; so there is no separation of Us from you all, even for a moment. It is only to show Our favor to the devotees that we assume special forms. For this reason only there is separation of Us from you as regards this body! There is nothing else. Besides you have no necessity with Our bodies. O Devas! Now if my Manus, men, Munis, Vaiṣṇavas and you all, purified by *mantras* desire very much to see My form clearly, then I tell you to request Maheśvara to carry out My word. O Brahmā! O creator! Better ask Mahādeva, the world teacher, that He would better compose the beautiful *Tantra-śāstra*, in accordance with the limbs of the *Vedas*. And that the above *śāstra* be full of *mantras* capable to yield desired fruits, *stotras* (hymns) and *kavacas* (protection-*mantras*) and rules of due worship in proper order. And that also My *mantra*, My *stotra*, and My *kavaca* be also given there in a hidden form, so that people who are sinners might not understand their real meanings and thus turn out against Me. It may be that one in a thousand or in a hundred may worship My *mantra*. And My *mantra* worshippers, the saints, become purified and come to My abode. If My *śāstra* be not well made—if everyone be able to understand its meaning—and if everyone be able to go from Bhūrloka to Goloka, then Thy labor in this creation of the world will all be in vain. Therefore dost Thou better create different worlds

according to the differences of *sāttvik, rājasik* and *tamo-guṇas;* then some will be the inhabitants of this Bhūrloka, some will be the inhabitants of Dyuloka according to their *karmas*. O Brāhmaṇa! If Mahādeva promises earnestly in this assembly of the Devas, I will then exhibit My true form.'

O Nārada! Thus speaking, the eternal *puruṣa* Śrī Kṛṣṇa remained silent. Hearing this, Brahmā, the creator of the world, gladly informed Śiva of this. When the Lord of knowledge, the foremost of the *jñānins*, Bhūtanātha heard the words of the creator, He took the Ganges water in His hands and swore that 'I will complete the *Tantra-śastra*, full of Rādhā-*mantras* and not opposed to the *Vedas*. If one touches the Ganges water and speaks lies, one remains in the terrible Kālasutra hell for a period of one Brahmā's lifetime.'

O Dvija! When Bhagavān Śaṅkara said this before the assembly of the Devas in the region of Goloka, Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared there with Rādhā. The Devas became exceedingly glad to see Him. They praised Him, the best *puruṣa,* and they were all filled with rapture and again engaged themselves in the grand *rāsa* festival. Some time after, Māhādeva lighted the torch of *mukti:* the *Tantra-śāstra* was published by Him, as promised. O child! Thus I have disclosed to you this anecdote, so very secret, and hard to attain. Thus Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is verily the liquid Gaṅgā sprung from the region of Goloka. This holy Gaṅgā, born of the bodies of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā inseparable from each other, grants enjoyment, lordship and liberation. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the highest Self, has placed Her in various places; so Gaṅgā is of the nature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and is everywhere, equally honored everywhere in the *brahmāṇḍa* (universe)."

Here ends the Twelfth Chapter in the Ninth Skandha on the origin of Gaṅgā in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIII—the Anecdote of Gaṅgā

1. Nārada said: "O Lord of the Devas! Kindly say to what *loka* did Gaṅgā go after 5,000 years of the Kali-yuga?"

2-4. Nārāyaṇa said: "The Bhāgīrathī Gaṅgā came down to Bhārata under the curse of Bhāratī; and when the term expired, She went back, by the will of God, to the region of Vaikuṇṭha. Also at the end of the period of their curses, Bhāratī and, Lakṣmī, too, left Bhārata and repaired to Nārāyaṇa. Gaṅgā, Lakṣmī, and Sarasvatī, these three and Tulasī all these four are so very dear to Śrī Hari."

5-6. Nārada said: "How did Gaṅgā appear from the lotus feet of Viṣṇu? Why did Brahmā put Her in His Kāmaṇḍalū? I have heard that Gaṅgā is the wife of Śiva; how then, came She to be the wife of Nārāyaṇa? Kindly describe all these in detail to me."

7-8. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Muni! In ancient times, in the region of Goloka, Gaṅgā assumed the liquid appearance. She was born of the bodies of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. So She is of the nature of both of Them and Their parts. Gaṅgā is the presiding deity of water. She is unequalled in Her beauty in this world. She is full of youth and adorned with all ornaments.

9-43. Her face was like the autumnal midday lotus and sweet smile was always reigning on Her lips; Her form was very beautiful; Her color was as bright as melted gold, and She looked brilliant like the autumnal Moon. Eyes and mind get cool and become pleasant at Her beauty and radiance; She was of purely *suddha-sattva;* Her loins were bulky and hard and She was covered with excellent clothing all over Her body. Her breasts were plump and prominent; they were raised, hard, and nicely round. Her eyes very fascinating, always casting sidelong glances. Her braids of hair situated a little oblique and the garland of *mālatī* flowers over it made Her look extremely handsome. The sandalwood-paste dot and the vermillion dot were seen on Her forehead. On Her cheeks the leaves of musk were drawn, Her lips were red like *bandhūka* flowers and they looked enchanting. Her rows of teeth looked like rows of ripe pomegranates; the ends of Her cloth not inflammable by fire, worn in front in a knot round the waist. She sat by the side of Kṛṣṇa, full of amorous desires, and abashed. She covered Her face with the end of Her cloth and was seeing, with a steadfast gaze the face of the Lord and She was drinking the nectar of His

face with great gladness. Her lotus face bloomed and became gladdened at the expectation of a first amorous embrace. She fainted on seeing the form of Her Lord, and a thrill of joy passed all over Her body. In the meanwhile Rādhikā came up there. Rādhā was attended by thirty *kotis* of *gopīs*. She looked brilliant like tens of millions of Moons. Seeing Gaṅgā by the side of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Her face and eyes became reddened with anger like a red lotus. Her color was yellow like a *campaka* flower and Her gait was like a maddened elephant. She was adorned with various invaluable ornaments made of jewels. Her pair of clothings were tied round Her waist. They were decked with invaluable jewels and not inflammable by fire (fire-proof). The *arghya* offered by Śrī Kṛṣṇa was on Her lotus feet, of the color of a flowering shrub, *hibiscus mutabilis*, and She was going slowly step-by-step. The Ṛṣis began to fan Her with white *cāmaras* no sooner She, descending from the excellent airplane decked with jewels, began to walk. Below the point where the parting of the hairs on the head is done, there was the dot of *sindura* on Her forehead. It looked brilliant like a bright lamp flame. On both sides of this *sindura-bindu*, a dot of musk and a dot of sandalwood paste were seen. When She began to quiver with anger, Her braid, with *pārijāta* garland round it began to tremble also. Her lips adorned with beautiful colors, began to quiver also. She took Her seat angrily on a jewel throne by the side of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Her attendants took their seats in their allotted positions.

Seeing Rādhā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa got up at once from His seat with reverence and addressed Her, smiling and began to converse with Her in sweet words. The *gopīs*, very much afraid and with their heads bent low, began to chant hymns to Her with devotion. Śrī Kṛṣṇa also began to praise Her with *stotras*. At this moment Gaṅgā Devī got up and praised Her with various hymns and asked Her welfare with fear and with humble words. Out of fear, Her throat, lips and palate were parched up. She took refuge humbly at Śrī Kṛṣṇa's feet. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then took Gaṅgā Devī on His breast when She became calm and quiet. At this interval Sureśvarī Gaṅgā looked at Rādhā, seated on a throne, lovely and sweet, as if She was burning with Brahman fire. Since the beginning of creation, She is the sole lady of innumerable

Brahmās and She is Eternal. At the first sight, She looked young as if twelve years old. Nowhere in any universe can be seen a lady so beautiful and so qualified. She was peaceful, calm and quiet, lovely, infinite and having no beginning nor end. She was auspicious, well-endowed with all auspicious signs, prosperous, and having the good fortune of the best husband. She was the foremost jewel amongst the ladies, and appeared as if all the beauties were concentrated in Her. Rādhā is the (left) half of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body; whether in age or in strength or in beauty, she was in every way perfectly equal to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Lakṣmī and the Lord of Lakṣmī both worship Rādhā. The excellent brilliance of Srī Kṛṣṇa was overpowered by the beauty of Rādhā. Taking Her seat on the throne, She began to chew betels offered by Her attendant *sakhīs*. She is the Mother of all the worlds; but no one is Her mother. She is fortunate, respected and proud. She is the ruling lady of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's life and soul, and ever dearer to Him than His *prāṇa* (vital breath).

O Devaṛṣi! Gaṅgā, the Governess of the Devas, looked at Her over and over again with a steadfast gaze; but Her eyes and mind were not at all satiated. At this moment, Rādhā addressed smilingly to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the world, humbly and in sweet words. 'O My Lord! Who is that lady sitting by Thy side, looking askance, eager and with a smiling countenance. She is enchanted with Thy beauteous form and fainting away. Her whole body is excited with rapturous joy. Hiding Her face with cloth She is frequently looking at Thee. Thou also dost look on Her smilingly and with desires. What are all these? Even during My presence in this Goloka, all these bad practices are being rampant.

44-51. It is Thou that art doing all these bad things often and often! We are female sex; what shall we do? We are naturally, of a very pleasing temper, simple. I bore and forgave all these out of our love. O licentious One! Take Thy Beloved and go away quickly from this Goloka. Otherwise these things will not bid fair to Thee. Firstly, one day I saw Thee, united with Virajā-Gopī, in the *candana* (sandalwood) forest. What to do? At the request of the *śakhīs*, I did forgive Thee. Then, hearing My footsteps Thou didst fly

away. Virajā, out of shame, quit Her body and assumed the form of a river that is million *yojanas* wide and four times as long. Even to this day that Virajā is existing, testifying to Thy glory (near Puri, Jagannātha)! When I went back to My home Thou didst go to Virajā again and cried aloud "O Viraje! O Viraje!" Hearing Your cry, Virajā, the *siddha-yogīnī* arose from the waters out of Her *yogik* power, and when She showed Thee Her divine appearance decked with

ornaments, Thou didst draw Her to Thy side and cast Thy seed in Her. It is owing to the casting of that seed in the womb of Virajā that the seven oceans have come into existence!

52-107. Secondly, one day I saw Thee in actual intercourse with the *gopī* named Śobhā! Hearing My footsteps, Thou fled'st away that day also. Out of shame Śobhā quit Her body and departed to the sphere of Moon (*candra-maṇḍala*). The cooling effect of the Moon is due to this Śobhā. When Śobhā was thus distressed, Thou didst divide Her and put some parts to gems and jewels, part to gold, partly to excellent pearls and gems, partly on the face of women, partly to the bodies of Kings, partly to the leaves of trees, partly to flowers, partly to ripe fruits, partly to corn, partly to palaces and temples, partly to purified materials, partly to young and tender shoots and foliage, and partly to milk. Thirdly, I saw Thee united with Prabhā-gopī in Brindāban. Thou fled'st away, hearing My footsteps. Out of shame, Prabhā quit Her body and departed to the Solar atmosphere. This Prabhā (luster) is fierce luminosity of the Solar atmosphere. Out of the pangs of separation Thou criedest and didst divide Prabhā and didst put some parts in Fire, partly amidst the Yakṣas, partly into lions, among men, partly amongst the Devas, partly in Vaiṣṇavas, partly in serpents, partly in Brāhmaṇas, partly in Munis, partly in ascetics, and partly in fortunate and prosperous ladies. Thou hadst to weep then after Thou hadst thus divided Prabhā, for Her separation. Fourthly I saw Thee in love union with the *gopī* Śānti in the *rāsa-maṇḍalam*. On the coming of the spring season, one day Thou with garlands of flowers on Thy neck and with Thy body besmeared with sandalwood paste and decked with ornaments, wast sleeping on a

bed of flowers with Śānti Gopī, decked with gems, in a temple made of gems and pearls and illumined by a lamp of jewels and Thou wast chewing the betel given by Thy beloved. Hearing My sound Thou fled'st away. Śānti Gopī, too, out of fear and shame quit Her body and disappeared in Thee. Therefore Śānti is reckoned as one of the noblest qualities. Out of the pain of separation, Thou didst divide the body of Śānti and distributed partly to forests, partly to Brahmā, partly to Me, partly to *śuddha-sattvā* Lakṣmī, partly to Thy *mantra* worshippers, partly to My *mantra* worshippers, partly to the ascetics, partly to Dharma, and partly to the religious persons. Fifthly, dost Thou remember that one day anointing all over Thy body fully with the sandalwood paste and good scent and with garlands on Thy neck, well dressed, bedecked with jewels, Thou wast sleeping with Kṣamā (forgiveness) *gopī* in ease and happiness, on a nice bedding interspersed with flowers and well scented. Thou wert so much overpowered by sleep after fresh intercourse that when I went and disturbed, then Thou two didst get up from the sweet sleep. I took away Thy yellow robes, the beautiful Muralī (flute), garlands made of forest flowers, Kaustubha gems, and invaluable earrings of pearls and gems. I gave them back to Thee at the earnest request of the *śakhīs*. Thy body turned black with sin and dire shame, Kṣamā then quit Her body out of shame and went down to the earth. Therefore Kṣamā turned out to be the repository of best qualities. Out of affection to Her, Thou didst divide Her body and distributed them partly to Viṣṇu, partly to the Vaiṣṇavas, partly to Dharma, partly to the religious persons, partly to weak persons, partly to ascetics, partly to the Devas, and partly to the Paṇḍitas (literary persons). O Lord! Thus I have described Thy qualities as far as I know. What more dost thou want to hear? Thou hast many more qualities! But I am not aware of them.' Having thus spoken, the red-lotus eyed Rādhā began to rebuke Gaṅgā sitting by the side of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with Her head bent low out of shame. At this time Gaṅgā, who was a *siddha-yogīnī* came to know all the mysteries, and instantly disappeared from the assembly in Her own water form.

The *siddha-yogīnī* Rādhā came to know also, by Her *yogik* power, the secrets of Gaṅgā and became ready to drink the whole water in one sip. Gaṅgā,

knowing this intention of Rādhā, by Her *yogik* power, took refuge of Kṛṣṇa and entered into His feet. Then Rādhā began to look out for Gaṅgā everywhere: first She searched in Goloka, then Vaikuṇṭha, then Brahmā-loka; then She searched all the *lokas* one by one but nowhere did She find Gaṅgā. All the places in Goloka became void of of water; all turned into dried mud, and all the aquatic animals died and fell to the ground. And Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Ananta, Dharma, Indra, Moon, Sun, Manus, Munis, Siddhas, ascetics all became very thirsty and their throats became parched. They then went to Goloka and bowed down with devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who was the Lord of all, beyond Prakṛti, the Supreme, worthy to be worshipped, the bestower of boons, the best, and the cause of boons; Who is the Lord of *gopas* and *gopīs;* Who is formless, without any desire, unattached, without refuge, attributeless, without any enthusiasm, changeless, and unstained; Who is all-will and who assumes forms to show favor to His devotees; Who is Sattva, the Lord of truth, the witness and eternal *puruṣa* and Who is the highest, the Supreme Lord, the best and most excellent, the highest Self and the Supreme God. They began to hymn Him. All were filled with intense feelings of devotion; tears of love were flowing from their eyes and the bodies of all were filled with ecstasy, the hairs standing on end. He is Para-brahman; His substance is made of transcendental Light, Who is the cause of all causes, who was seated in a wonderful throne, built of invaluable gems and jewels, who was being fanned by the *gopas* with white *chowries*, who was seeing and hearing with great delight, and smiling countenance, the dancing and singing of the *gopīs*, who was chewing the scented betel offered by Rādhā and who was residing in. the heart of His dearest Śrī Rādhā, who was perfect, all-pervading, and the Lord of the *rāsa* circle. The Manus, Munis, and the ascetics all bowed down to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, no sooner they beheld Him. Joy and wonder at once caught hold of their hearts. They then looked at one another and gave over to Brahmā the task of communicating their feelings. The four-faced Brahmā, with Viṣṇu on His right and Vāma Deva on His left, gradually came in front of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Wherever He cast His glance in the *rāsa-maṇḍalam*, He saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa, full of the highest bliss, of the nature of the highest bliss, sitting. All have turned out Kṛṣṇas; their seats were all

uniform; all were two-armed and with flutes in their hands; on everyone's neck is a forest garland; peacock's tail was on the top of everyone's crest, and Kaustubha jewels were on all their breasts. The forms of all of them were very beautiful; very lovely and very peaceful. No difference at all between them whether in form, or in qualities, or in ornaments, or in radiance, age or luster—in no respect no one was inferior to another. No one was imperfect; no one was deficient in lordliness. It was indeed very difficult to make out who was the master and who was the servant. Sometimes He is seen in His *teja* form as the great Light, and there is nothing else; sometimes there is that clear divine form; sometimes He comes formless; sometimes with form; and again sometimes both with and without form. Sometimes there is no Rādhā; there is only Kṛṣṇa; and sometimes again in every seat there is the *yugal-murti* Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa combined. Sometimes Rādhā assumes the form of Kṛṣṇa. So the creator Brahmā could not make out whether Śrī Kṛṣṇa was a female or a male. At last He meditated on Śrī Kṛṣṇa in his heart-lotus and began to chant hymns to Him with devotion and prayed for forgiveness for his misdoings. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa got pleased, the creator, opening His eyes, saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa on the breast of Śrī Rādhā. There were His attendants on all the sides and the *gopīs* all around. Seeing this, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara bowed down to Him and sang His praises.

108-113. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Lakṣmī, the omnipresent cause of all, the Lord of all, and the internal ruler of all, knew their intentions and, addressing them, separately said: 'O Brahmā! Is all well with you? O Lord of Kāmalā! Come here. O Mahādeva! Come here; let all be well to you. You all have come to me for Gaṅgā. Gaṅgā has taken refuge under My feet out of fear for Rādhā. Seeing Gaṅgā by My side, Rādhā wanted to drink Her up. However I will give over Gaṅgā to the hands of you all; but you will have to pray to Rādhā, so that Gaṅgā becomes fearless of Her.' The lotus-born Brahmā smiled at Śrī Kṛṣṇa's words and began to sing hymns to Rādhā, Who is fit to be worshipped by all. The creator Brahmā, compiler of the four *Vedas*, the four-faced one praised Rādhā with his four heads, bent low and addressed Her thus:

114-125. Brahmā said: 'O Rādhe! Gaṅgā appeared from Thee and the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Both of You were transformed before into the liquid forms in the *rāsā-maṇḍalam* on hearing the music of Śaṅkara. And that liquid form is Gaṅgā. So She is born of Thee and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Hence She is like Thy daughter and to be loved as such. She will be initiated in Thy *mantra* and She will worship Thee. The four-armed Lord of Vaikuṇṭha will be Her husband. And when She will appear in parts on earth, the salt ocean will be Her husband. O Mother! The Gaṅgā that dwells in Goloka is dwelling everywhere. O Governess of the Devas! Thou art Her mother; and She is always Thy Self-born daughter.' Hearing thus, the words of Brahmā, Rādhā gave Her assent towards the protection of Gaṅgā. And then Gaṅgā appeared from the toe-tip of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The liquid Gaṅgā then assumed Her own form and, getting up from water, was received with great honor by the Devas. Bhagavān Brahmā took a little of that Ganges water in His *kāmaṇḍalū* and Bhagavān Mahādeva kept some of it on His own head.

The lotus-born Brahmā then initiated Gaṅgā into the Rādhā *mantra* and gave Her instructions, Rādhā-*stotra* (hymn of Rādhā) according to the *Sāma-Veda*, Rādhā-*kavaca* (protection *mantra*), Rādhā-*dhyāna* (meditation on Rādhā), method of worship of Rādhā, and Rādhā's *purascharana*. Gaṅgā worshipped Rādhā according to those instructions and went to Vaikuṇṭha. O Muni! Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Gaṅgā and the world-purifying Tulasī, these four became the wives of Nārāyaṇa. Kṛṣṇa then smiled and explained to Brahmā the history of time, hardly to be comprehended by others. He then spoke: 'O Brahmā! O Viṣṇu! O Maheśvara! Now you better take Gaṅgā, and I will now tell you what a change has been effected by this time. Hear.

126-136. You, the three Devas, the other Devas, Munis, Manus, Siddhas, and other Mahātmās that are present here, are living now. For this region of Goloka is not affected by *kāla* (time). Now the *kalpa* is going to expire. So in the other regions than Goloka and Vaikuṇṭha, the Brahmās, etc., that were existing in all other universes, have all now dissolved in My body. O lotus-born! Save Goloka and Vaikuṇṭha, all are now under water, the pre-state of earth. Better go and create your own *brahmāṇḍas* and Gaṅgā will go to that

newly-created *brahmāṇḍa*. I will also create other worlds and the Brahmās thereof. Now you all better go with the Devas and do your own works respectively. You have waited here for a long interval. As many Brahmās that have fallen all appear again.' Thus saying Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Rādhā went to His inner chamber. The Devas also instantly retired from that spot and engaged themselves earnestly in the creation work. Gaṅgā remained as before in the region of Goloka, Vaikuṇṭha, Śivaloka, Brahmā-loka, and in other places, by the command of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She is named Viṣṇupadī, because She appeared from the feet of Viṣṇu. Thus I have described to you this pleasant, essential story of Gaṅgā, leading to liberation. What more do you now want to hear? Say."

Here ends the Thirteenth Chapter on the anecdote of Gaṅgā in the Ninth Skandha in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIV—Gaṅgā Becomes the wife of Nārāyaṇa

1-2. Nārada said: "O Lord! Gaṅgā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, and the world-purifying Tulasī—these four are dearest to Nārāyaṇa. Out of these, Gaṅgā went from the region of Goloka to Vaikuṇṭha. So I have heard. But how did She come to be the wife of Nārāyaṇa? I have not heard. Kindly describe this."

3. Nārāyaṇa said: "Brahmā came from Goloka to the region of Vaikuṇṭha accompanied by Gaṅgā.

4-23. Brahmā said to Nārāyaṇa: 'O Lord! Gaṅgā, born of the bodies of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, full of youth, modest, extraordinarily beautiful, of pure *śuddha-sattva*, and void of anger and egotism, does not like to marry anyone save Thee, as She is born of Thee. But Rādhā is of a very proud nature and very wrathful. She was even ready to drink up Gaṅgā. But Gaṅgā at once and intelligently took refuge of the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. So the whole Goloka became void of water. Seeing this, I have come to know in particular the whole history of the case. Then Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Knower and

the Ruler of the hearts of all, came to know my heart and instantly caused Gaṅgā to issue from His toe and handed Her over to me. I bowed down to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and now I have come with Gaṅgā to Thee. Now Thou dost marry the Sureśvarī Gaṅgā according to the Gāndharva rule of marriage. As Thou art a Deva of taste and *rasa* in the assembly of the Devas, so Gaṅgā is. As Thou art a gem amongst the males, so She is the gem amongst the females. And the union of a *rasika* man with a *rasika* woman is exceedingly pleasant. Now marry this lady who has come of Her own accord to Thee. Śrī Mahā-Lakṣmī becomes annoyed with one who does not marry a woman who has come spontaneously. There is no doubt about this. The wise men never insult the Prakṛti. All the Puruṣas (males) are born of Prakṛti and all the females are parts of Prakṛti. So Prakṛti and Puruṣa are both inseparable and verily one and the same. So these two should never insult each other. If Thou sayest that Gaṅgā is attached to Kṛṣṇa; how canst Thou marry Her? The reply is, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa is beyond the attributes and beyond Prakṛti, so Thou art also above Prakṛti. The one-half of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is two-armed; the other half of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is four-armed. Rādhā has appeared from the left side of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He Himself is the right half and Padmā is His left-half. As there is no difference between Rādhā and Kāmalā so there is no difference between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Thee. Therefore as Gaṅgā is born of Thy body, she wants to marry Thee. As Prakṛti and Puruṣa are really one and the same without any difference, so the males and females are one.'

Thus speaking to Nārāyaṇa, Brahmā handed Gaṅgā over to Nārāyaṇa and went away. Nārāyaṇa then, married Gaṅgā smeared with sandalwood paste and flowers, according to the rules of the Gandharva marriage. The Lord of Lakṣmī then spent his time happily in enjoyment with Gaṅgā. Gaṅgā had to go to the earth (under the Bhārati's curse) and afterwards returned to Vaikuṇṭha. As Gaṅgā appeared from the feet of Viṣṇu, She is denominated Viṣṇupadī. Gaṅgā Devī was very much overpowered with enjoyment in Her first intercourse with Nārāyaṇa; so much so that She remained motionless. Thus Gaṅgā spent the days happily with Nārāyaṇa. Sarasvatī's jealousy towards Gaṅgā did not disappear, though She was advised by Lakṣmī Devī not to do so. Sarasvatī cherished incessantly the

feeling of jealousy towards Gaṅgā. But Gaṅgā had not the least feeling of jealousy towards Sarasvatī.

At last, one day, when vexed too much, Gaṅgā became angry and cursed Sarasvatī to take Her birth in Bhārata. So Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Gaṅgā were the wives of Nārāyaṇa. Lastly Tulasī became the wife of Nārāyaṇa. So the number of wives of Nārāyaṇa amounted to four."

Here ends the Fourteenth Chapter in the Ninth Skandha on the story of Gaṅgā becoming the wife of Nārāyaṇa in the Mahāpuranam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XV—the Anecdote of Tulasī

1-6. Nārada said: "O Bhagavān! How came the pure chaste Tulasī to be the wife of Nārāyaṇa? Where was Her birthplace? And what was She in Her previous birth? What family did She belong to? Whose daughter was She? And what austerities did She practice, that She got Nārāyaṇa for Her husband, Who is above Prakṛti, not liable to change without any effort, the Universal Self, Para-brahman and the highest God; Who is the Lord of all, omniscient, the cause of all, the receptacle of all, omnipresent, and the preserver of all. And how did Tulasī, the chief Devī of Nārāyaṇa, turn into a tree? Herself quite innocent, how She was attacked by the fierce Asura? O remover of all doubts! My mind, plain and simple, has become restless. I am eager to hear all this. So kindly cut asunder all my doubts."

7-40. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! The Manu Dakṣa Sāvarni was very religious, devoted to Viṣṇu, of wide renown, of a great name and born with Viṣṇu's parts. Dakṣa Sāvarni's son Brahmā Sāvarni was also very religious, devoted to Viṣṇu and of a pure *śuddha-sattva-guṇa*. Brahmā Sāvarni's son, Dharma Sāvarni was devoted to Viṣṇu and He was the master of his senses. Dharma Sāvarni's son Rudra Sāvarni was also a man of restraint and very devoted. Rudra Sāvarni's son was Deva Sāvarni, devoted to Viṣṇu. Deva Sāvarni's son was Indra Sāvarni. He was a great Bhakta of Viṣṇu. His son was Vṛṣadhvaja. But He was a fanatic *śaiva* (devoted to

Śiva). At his house Śiva Himself remained for three *yugas* according to the Deva measure. So much so that Bhagavān Bhūtanātha loved him more than His own son. Vṛṣadhvaja did not recognize Nārāyaṇa, nor Lakṣmī nor Sarasvatī nor another body. He discarded the worship of all the Devas. He worshipped Śaṅkara only.

The greatly exciting Lakṣmī Puja (worship of Mahā-Lakṣmī) in the month of Bhādra and Śrī Pañchamī Puja in the month of Māgha, which are approved of by the *Vedas*, Vṛṣadhvaja put an entire stop to these and the Sarasvatī-*pūjā*. At this the Sun became angry with King Vṛṣadhvaja, the discarder of the holy thread, the hater of Viṣṇu, and cursed Him thus: "O King! As you are purely devoted to Śiva and Śiva alone, and as you do not recognize any other Devas, I say within no time, you will be deprived of all your wealth and prosperity." Śaṅkara, hearing this curse, became very angry and taking His trident, ran after the Sun. The Sun, becoming afraid, accompanied His father Kaśyapa and took refuge of Brahmā. Bhagavān Śaṅkara went to Brahmā-loka, with trident in His hands. Brahmā became afraid of Mahādeva and took Sun to the region of Vaikuṇṭha. Out of terror, the throats of Brahmā, Kaśyapa, and Sun became parched and dry, and they all went afraid for refuge to Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of all. They all bowed down to Him and praised Him frequently and finally informed Him of the cause of their coming and why they were so much afraid.

Nārāyaṇa showed them mercy and granted them *abhaya* (no fear). 'O You! Who are afraid, take rest. What cause of fear there can be to you, when I am here! Whoever remembers Me, wherever he may be, involved in danger or fear, I go there with the Sudarśan disc in My hand save him. O Devas! I am always the creator, preserver and destroyer of this universe. In the form of Viṣṇu, I am the preserver; in the form of Brahmā, I am the creator; and in the form of Maheśa, I am the destroyer. I am Śiva; I am you; and I am Sūrya, composed of the three qualities. It is I who assumes many forms and preserves the universe. Better go to your respective places. What fear can ye suspect? I say, all your fears due to Śaṅkara are verily removed from this day. Bhagavān Śaṅkara, the Lord of all, is the Lord of the *sādhus*. He always

hears the words of His *bhaktas;* and He is kind to them. He is their Self. Both the Sun and Śiva are dearer to Me than My life. No one is more energetic than Śaṅkara and the Sun. Mahādeva can easily create ten million Suns and ten million Brahmās. There is nothing impossible with Śūlapāni. Having no consciousness of any outer thing, immersed, day and night, in meditating on Me with His whole heart concentrated, He is repeating with devotion My *mantra* from His five faces and He always sings My glories. I am also thinking, day and night, of His welfare. Whoever worships Me in whichever way, I also favor him similarly. Bhagavān Mahādeva is of the nature of Śiva, all auspiciousness; He is the presiding deity of Śiva, that is, liberation. It is because liberation is obtained from Him, He is called Śiva.'

O dear Nārada! While Nārāyaṇa was thus speaking, the trident bolder Mahādeva, with his eyes red like reddened lotuses, mounting on His bull, came up there and getting down from His Bull, humbly bowed down with devotion to the Lord of Lakṣmī, peaceful and higher than the highest. Nārāyaṇa was then seated on His throne, decked with jeweled ornaments. There was a crown on His crest; two earrings were hanging from His ears; the disc was in His hand, forest-flower garlands on His neck, of the color of fresh blue rain cloud; His form exceedingly beautiful. The four-armed attendants were fanning Him with their four hands; His body is smeared all over with sandalwood paste and He is wearing yellow garments. That Bhagavān, distressed with the thought of welfare for His *bhaktas*, the Highest Self was sitting on a jewel throne and chewing the betel offered by Padmā and with smiling countenance, seeing and hearing the dancing and singing of the Vidyādharīs. When Mahādeva bowed down to Nārāyaṇa, Brahmā also bowed down to Mahādeva. The Sun, too, surprised, bowed down to Mahādeva with devotion. Kaśyapa, too, bowed and with great *bhakti*, began to praise Mahādeva. On the other hand, Śaṅkara praised Nārāyaṇa and took His seat on the throne. The attendants of Nārāyaṇa began to fan Mahādeva with white *chowries*. Then Viṣṇu addressed Him with sweet nectar like voice and said: 'O Maheśvara! What brings Thee here? Hast Thou been angry?'

41-45. Mahādeva said: 'O Viṣṇu! King Vṛṣadhvaja is My great devotee; he is dearer to Me than My life. The Sun has cursed him and so I am angry. Out of the affection for a son I am ready to kill Sūrya. Sūrya took Brahmā's refuge and now he and Brahmā have taken Thy refuge. And those who being distressed take Thy refuge, either in mind or in word, become entirely safe and free from danger. They conquer death and old age. What to speak of them, then, of those who come personally to Thee and take Thy refuge. The remembrance of Hari takes away all dangers. All good comes to them. O Lord of the world! Now tell me what becomes of My stupid *bhakta* who has become devoid of fortune and prosperity by the curse of Sūrya.'

46-51. Viṣṇu said: 'O Śaṅkara! Twenty-one *yugas* elapsed within this one-half *ghatikā*, by the coincidence of Fate (Daiva). Now go quickly to Thy abode. Through the unavoidable coincidence of the cruel Fate, Vṛṣadhvaja died. His son Rathadhvaja, too, died. Rathadhvaja had two noble sons Dharmadhvaja and Kuśadhvaja. Both of them are great Vaiṣṇavas; but, through Sūrya's curse, they have become luckless. Their kingdoms are lost; they have become destitute of all property, prosperity and they are now engaged in worshipping Mahā-Lakṣmī. Mahā-Lakṣmī will be born in parts of their two wives. Then again, by the grace of Lakṣmī, Dharmadhvaja and Kuśadhvaja will be prosperous and become great Kings. O Śambhu, Your worshipper Vṛṣadhvaja is dead. Therefore Thou dost go back to Thy place. O Brahmā, O Sun! O Kaśyapa! You all also better go to your places respectively.'

O Nārada! Thus saying, Bhagavān Viṣṇu went with His wife to the inner rooms. The Devas also went gladly to their own places respectively. And Mahādeva, too, Who is always quite full within Himself, departed quickly to perform His *tapas*."

Here ends the Fifteenth Chapter on the question of anecdote of Tulasī in the Ninth Skandha in the Mahāpuranam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVI—Incarnation of Mahā-Lakṣmī

1-30. Śrī Nārāyaṇa said: "O Muni! Dharmadhvaja and Kuśadhvaja practiced severe *tapasyā* and worshipped Lakṣmī. They then got separately their desired boons. By the boon of Mahā-Lakṣmī, they became again the rulers of the earth. They acquired great religious merit and they also had their children. The wife of Kuśadhvaja was named Mālāvatī. After a long time, the chaste wife delivered one daughter, born of the parts of Kāmalā. The daughter, on being born, became full of wisdom. On being born, the baby began to sing clearly the Vedic *mantrams* from the lying-in-chamber. Therefore She was named Vedavatī by the Paṇḍitas. She bathed after her birth and became ready to go to the forest to practice severe *tapas*. Everyone then tried earnestly to dissuade her, devoted to Nārāyaṇa, from the enterprise. But she did not listen to anybody. She went to Puṣkara and practiced hard *tapasyā* for one *manvantara*. Yet her body did not get lean a bit; rather she grew more plumpy and fatter. By degrees her youth began to show signs in her body; one day she heard an incorporeal voice from the air above, 'O fair one! In your next birth Śrī Hari, adored by Brahmā and other gods, will be your husband.' Hearing this, her joy knew no bounds. She went to the solitary caves in the Gandhamādan Mountain to practice *tapas* again. When a long time passed away in this *tapasyā*, one day the irresistible Rāvana came there as guest. No sooner Vedavatī saw the guest, then she gave him, out of devotion to the guest, water to wash feet, delicious fruits, and cool water for his drink. The villain accept the hospitality and sitting there, began to ask: 'O auspicious one! Who are you?' Seeing the fair smiling lady, with beautiful teeth, her face blooming like the autumnal lotus, of heavy loins and full breast, that villain became passionate. He lost entirely all consciousness and became ready to make violence on Her. Seeing this, the chaste Vedavatī, became angry and out of her *tapas* influence, astounded him and made him insensible to move. He remained motionless like an inanimate body. He could not move his hands nor feet nor could he speak. That wicked fellow then mentally recited praises to her. And the praise of the higher Śakti can never go futile. She became pleased and granted him religious merits in the next world. But she

also pronounced this curse: ‘When you have touched my body out of passion, then you will be ruined with your whole family for my sake. Now see my power.’

O Nārada! Thus saying to Rāvana, Vedavatī left her body by her *yogik* power. Rāvana took her body and delivered it to the Ganges, and he then returned to his own home. But Rāvana thought over the matter repeatedly and exclaimed, ‘What wonder have I seen! Oh! What a miracle this lady has wrought!’ Rāvana thus lamented. This Vedavatī, of pure character, took her birth afterwards as Sītā, the daughter of Janaka. For the sake of this Sītā, Rāvana was ruined with his whole family. By the religious merits of her previous birth, the ascetic lady got Bhagavān Hari Śrī Rāmachandra, the fullest of the full, for her husband, remained for a long time in great enjoyment with the Lord of the world; a thing very difficult to be attained! Though she was a *jātismarā* (one who knows all about her past lives), she did not feel any pain due to her practicing severe austerities in her previous birth; for when the pains end in success, the pains are not then felt at all. Sītā, in Her fresh youth enjoyed various pleasures in the company of her husband, handsome, peaceful, humorous and witty, the chief of the Devas, loved by the female sex, well-qualified, and just what she desired. But the all-powerful time is irresistible; the truthful Rāmachandra, the scion of the Raghu’s family, had to keep up the promise made by his father and so he had to go to the forest, ordained by time. He remained with Sītā and Lakṣmana near the sea.

Once the Fire God appeared to Him in the form of a Brāhmaṇa. Fire, in a Brāhmaṇa-form, saw Rāmachandra morose and became himself mortified. Then the truthful Fire addressed the truthful Rāmachandra: “O Bhagavān Rāmachandra! I now speak to you how time is now coming to you. Now has come the time when your Sītā will be stolen.

31-48. The course of Destiny is irresistible; none else is more powerful than time, Fate. So give over your Sītā, the world Mother to me and keep with you this *chhāyā*-Sītā (shadow Sītā; false Sītā). When the time of Sītā’s ordeal by fire will take place I will give Her back to you. The Devas united have

sent me to you. I am not really a Brāhmaṇa; but I am Agṇi-Deva (eater of oblations).'

Rāmachandra heard Fire and gave His assent. But His heart shattered. He did not speak of this to Lakṣmana. By *yogik* power Agṇi (Fire) created a Māyā-Sītā. This Māyā-Sītā, O Nārada, was perfectly equal to the real Sītā. Fire then handed this Māyā-Sītā to Rāmachandra. Hūtāsana (fire) took the real Sītā and said, "Never divulge this to any other body" and went away. What to speak of divulging the secret to any other body, Lakṣmana even could not know it. By this time Rāma saw one deer, made of all gold. To bring that deer carefully to her, Sītā sent Rāmachandra with great eagerness. Putting Sītā under Lakṣmana's care, in that forest, Rāma went himself immediately and pierced the deer by one arrow. That *māyā-mrīga* (the deer created by magic powers) on being pierced, cried out 'Ha Lakṣmana!' and seeing Hari before him and remembering the name of Hari, quit his life. The deer body then vanished; and a divine body made its appearance in its stead. This new body mounting on an aerial car made of jewels, ascended to Vaikuṇṭha. That *māyik* (magic) deer was in its previous birth a servant of the two gatekeepers of Vaikuṇṭha; but for the sake of some emergency, he had to take up this Rākhsasa birth. He again became the servant of two door-keepers of Vaikuṇṭha. On the other hand Sītā Devī, hearing the cry 'Ha Lakṣmana!' became very distressed and sent Lakṣmana in search of Rāma. No sooner did Lakṣmana get out of the hermitage, the irresistible Rāvana took away Sītā gladly to the city of Lanka (Ceylon). Now Rāmachandra, seeing Lakṣmana on the way in the forest, became merged in the ocean of sorrows and without losing any time came hurriedly to the hermitage where he could not find Sītā. Instantly he fell unconscious on the ground; and after a long time, when he regained his consciousness, he lamented and wandered here and there in search of Her. After some days on the banks of the river Godāvarī, getting the information of Sītā, he built a bridge across the ocean with the help of His monkey armies. Then he entered with his army into Lanka and slew Rāvana with arrows with all his friends. When Sītā's ordeal by fire came, Agṇi (Fire) handed over the real Sītā to Rāmachandra. The shadow Sītā

then humbly addressed Agṇi and Rāma Chandra, 'O Lord! What am I to do now? Settle my case.'

49-53. Agṇi and Rāmachandra both of them then said to *chhāyā*-Sītā: 'O Devī! Go to Puṣkara and practice *tapasyā* there; that place is the giver of religious merits; and then you will be the *svarga*-Lakṣmī (Lakṣmī of Heaven).' Hearing this, the *chhāyā*-Sītā went and practiced *tapasyā* for three divine *lakh* years and became Mahā-Lakṣmī. This *svarga*-Lakṣmī appeared at one time from the sacrificial *kuṇḍa* (pit). She was known as the daughter of Drupada and became the wife of the five Pāṇḍavas. She was Vedavatī, the daughter of Kuśadhvaja in the Satya-yuga; Sītā, the wife of Rāma and the daughter of Janaka in Tretā-yuga; and Draupadī, the daughter of Drupada, in the Dvāpara-yuga. As she existed in the Satya, Tretā, and Dvāpara-yugas, the three *yugas*, hence She is Trihāyanī."

54. Nārada said: "O chief of Munis! O remover of doubts! Why had Draupadī five husbands? A great doubt has arisen in my mind on this point. Remove my doubt."

55-63. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Devaṛṣi! When, in the city of Lanka, the real Sītā came before Rāma, then *chhāyā*-Sītā, full of youth and beauty, became very anxious. Agṇi Deva and Rāmachandra both told her to go to Puṣkara and worship Śaṅkara. While this *chhāyā*-Sītā was practicing austerities in Puṣkara, She became very anxious to get a good husband and asked from Mahādeva the boon 'Grant me a husband,' and repeated it five times. Śiva, the chief among the humorous, witty persons, hearing this, said, 'O Dear! You will get five husbands,' and thus granted her the boon. Therefore She became the dearest wife of the five Pāṇḍavas.

Now hear other facts. When the war at Lanka was over, Śrī Rāmachandra got his own dear wife Sītā, and installing Vibhīsana on the throne of Lanka, returned to Ayodhyā. He ruled for eleven thousand years in Bhārata and finally went to Vaikuṇṭha with his all his subjects. Vedavatī, the incarnation in part of Lakṣmī dissolved in the body of Kāmalā. Thus I have described to you the pure anecdote of Vedavatī. Hearing this destroys sins and

increases virtue. The four *Vedas* reigned incarnate, in their true forms, on the lips of Vedavatī; hence She was named Vedavatī. Thus I have told you the anecdote of the daughter of Kuśadhvaja. Now hear the story of Tulasī, the daughter of Dharmadhvaja."

Here ends the Sixteenth Chapter in the Ninth Skandha on the incarnation of Mahā-Lakṣmī in the house of Kuśadhvaja in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVII—the Anecdote of Tulasī

1-19. Śrī Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! The wife of Dharmadhvaja was Mādhavī. Going to the Gandhamādan Mountain, She began to enjoy, with great gladness, pleasures with the king Dharmadhvaja. The bed was prepared, strewn with flowers and scented with sandalwood paste. She smeared sandalwood paste all over her body. The flowers and cool breeze in contact with the sweet scent of sandalwood paste began to cool the bodies. Mādhavī was the jewel amongst women. Her whole body was very elegant. Besides it was adorned all over with jeweled ornaments. As she was humorous, so the king was very expert in that respect. It seemed as if the creator created especially for Dharmadhvaja, the humorous lady Mādhavī expert in amorous affairs. Both of them were skilled in amorous sports. So no one did like to desist from amorous enjoyments. One hundred divine years passed in this way—day and night passed unnoticed. The king then got back his consciousness and desisted from his amorous embraces. But the lustful woman did not find herself satisfied. However, by the Deva's influence, she became pregnant and conceived for one hundred years. In the womb there was the incarnation of Lakṣmī; and her body's luster increased day by day. Then, on an auspicious day, on an auspicious moment, auspicious *yoga*, auspicious *lagna*, auspicious *amsa*, and on an auspicious combination of planetary rulers and their houses, she delivered on the full moon night of the month of Kārtik one beautiful daughter, the incarnation in part of Lakṣmī. The face of the baby looked like the autumnal moon; her two eyes resembled autumnal lotuses and her upper

and lower lips looked beautiful like ripe Bimba fruits. The daughter began, no sooner she was born, to look on all sides of the lying-in-room. The palm and lower part of feet were red. The navel was deep and below that there were three wrinkles. Her loins were circular. Her body was hot in the winter and cold in the summer and pleasant to touch. The hairs on her head were hanging like the roots of the fig tree. Her color was bright like *campaka;* She was a jewel amongst women. Men and women cannot compare her beauty. The holy wise men named Her Tulasī. As soon as she was born, she looked of the female sex, full in every way. Though prevented repeatedly by all, She went to the forest of Badarī for practicing *tapasyā*. There she practiced hard *tapasyā* for one *lakh* divine years. Her main object was to get Nārāyaṇa for her husband. In summer she practiced *panchatapā* (surrounded by fire on four sides and on the top); in the winter she remained in water, and in the rainy season she remained in the open air and endured the showers of the rain. For twenty thousand years She passed away thus in eating fruits and water. For thirty thousand years she subsisted only on the leaves of trees. When the forty thousandth year came, she subsisted only on air and her body became thinner and thinner day by day. Then for ten thousand years afterwards she left eating anything whatsoever and without any aim, stood on only one leg. At this time the lotus-born Brahmā, seeing this, appeared there to grant her boons. On seeing Him, Tulasī immediately bowed down to Brahmā, the Four-faced One riding on His vehicle, the Swan.

20. He then addressed her and said: 'O Tulasī! Ask a boon that you like. Whether it be devotion to Hari, servantship to Hari, freedom from old age or freedom from death, I will grant that to you.'

21-27. Tulasī said: 'Father! I now say you my mind. Hear. What is the use of hiding away my views out of fear or shame to one who knows everything reigning in one's heart. I am Tulasī *gopī* (cowherdess); I used to dwell before in Goloka. I was a dear maidservant of Radhikā, the beloved of Kṛṣṇa. I was also born of Her in part, Her *sakhis* (female attendants) used to love me. Once in the *rāsa-maṇḍalam* I was enjoyed by Govinda, but I was

not satiated; and while I was lying down in an unconscious state, Rādhā, the governess-in-chief of the *rāsa* circle, came there and saw me in that state. She rebuked Govinda and out of anger, cursed me: 'Go at once and be born as a human being.' At this Govinda spoke to me: 'If you go and practice *tapas* in Bhārata, Brahmā will get pleased and He will grant you boon. Then you will get Nārāyaṇa, the four-armed, born of Me in part as your husband.' O Father! Thus speaking, Śrī Kṛṣṇa disappeared out of sight. Out of Rādhā's fear, I quit my body and am now born in this world. Now grant me this boon that I get the peaceful, lovely, beautiful Nara for my husband.'

28-37. Brahmā said: 'O child Tulasī! The *gopa* (cowherd) Sudāmā was born of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body. At the present time he is very energetic, He too, under the curse of Rādhā, has come and taken his birth amongst the Dānavas. He is named Śankhachūda. No one is equal to him in strength. In Goloka, when he saw you before, he was overpowered with passion for you. Only out of Rādhā's influence, he could not embrace you. That Sudāmā is *jātismara* (knows all about his previous births); and you, too, are *jātismara*. There is nothing unknown to you. O beautiful one! You will now be his wife. Afterwards you will get Nārāyaṇa, the beautiful and lovely for your husband. Thus under the curse of Nārāyaṇa, you will be transformed into the world-purifying Tulasī tree. You will be the foremost amongst the flowers and will be dearer to Nārāyaṇa than His life. No one's worship will be complete without Thee as leaf. You will remain as a tree in Vṛṇdāvana and you will be widely known as Vṛṇdāvanī. The *gopas* and *gopīs* will worship Mādhava with Your leaves. Being the presiding Deity of the Tulasī tree, you will always enjoy the company of Kṛṣṇa, the best of the *gopas*.' O Nārada! Thus bearing Brahmā's words, the Devī Tulasī became very glad. A smile appeared in her face. She then bowed down to the Creator and said:

38-40. 'O Father! I speak now truly to Thee that I am not as devoted to the four-armed Nārāyaṇa as I am devoted to Śyāmasundara, the two-armed. For my intercourse with Govinda Śrī Kṛṣṇa was suddenly interrupted and

my desire was not gratified. It is because of Śrī Govinda's words that I prayed for the four-armed. Now it appears certain that by Thy grace I will get again my Govinda, very hard to be attained. But, O Father! Do this, that I be not afraid of Rādhā.'

41-48. Brahmā said: 'O Child! I now give you the sixteen-lettered Rādhā *mantra* to you. By Her Grace you will be dear to Rādhā as Her life. Rādhikā will not be able to know anything of your secret dealings. O fortunate one! You will be dear to Govinda like Rādhā.' Thus saying, Brahmā, the Creator of the world, gave her the sixteen-lettered Rādhā *mantra, stotra, kavaca*, mode of worship and *puraścharana,* and He blessed her. Tulasī, then, engaged herself in worshipping Rādhā, as directed. By the boon of Brahmā, Tulasī attained *siddhi* (success) like Lakṣmī. Out of the power of the *siddha-mantra*, She got her desired boon. She became fortunate in getting various pleasures, hard to be attained in this world. Her mind became quiet. All the toils of *tapasyā* disappeared. When one gets the fruit of one's labor, all the troubles then transform to happiness. She then finished her food and drink, and slept on a beautiful bed strewn with flowers and scented with sandalwood paste."

Here ends the Seventeenth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the anecdote of Tulasī in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVIII—the Union of Śankhachūda with Tulasī

1-26. Nārāyaṇa said: "Thus highly pleased, Tulasī went to sleep with a gladdened heart. She, the daughter of Vṛṣadhvaja, was then in her blooming youth and while asleep, Cupid, the God of five arrows, shot at her five arrows (by which one gets enchanted and swooned). Though the Devī was smeared with sandalwood paste and She slept on a bed strewn with flowers, her body was felt as if being burnt. Out of joy, the hairs stood on their ends all over her body; her eyes were reddened and her body began to quiver. Sometimes She felt uneasiness, sometimes dryness; sometimes She got faint; sometimes drowsiness and sometimes again

pleasantness; sometimes she became conscious, sometimes sorrowful. Sometimes she got up from her bed; sometimes she sat; and sometimes she fell again to sleep. The flower-bed, strewn with sandalwood paste, appeared to her full of thorns; nice delicious fruits and cold water appeared to her like poison. Her house appeared to her like a hole in a ground and her fine garments seemed to her like fire. The mark of *sindūra* on her forehead appeared, as it were, a boil, a sore. She began to see in her dreams that one beautiful, well clothed, humorous, young man with smile in his lips, appeared to her. His body was besmeared with sandalwood paste and decked with excellent jewels; garlands of forest flowers were suspending from his neck. Coming there, he was drinking the honey of her lotus face. He was speaking on love themes and on various other sweet topics. As if he was embracing amorously and enjoying the pleasures of intercourse. After the intercourse he was going away; again he was coming near.

The lady was addressing him, 'O Darling! O Lord of my heart! Where do you go? Come close.' Again when she became conscious, she began to lament bitterly. Thus on entering in her youth, the Devī Tulasī began to live in the hermitage of Badarī (those who visit Badarī are not to enter again in any womb). On the other hand the great *yogī* Śankhachūda obtained the Kṛṣṇa-*mantra* from Mahārṣi Jaigīsavya and got *siddhi* (success) in Puṣkara-*tīrtha* (sacred place of pilgrimage where one crosses the world). Holding on his neck the *kavaca* named Sarvamaṅgalamaya and obtaining the boon from Brahmā as he desired, he arrived at Badarī by Brahmā's command. The signs of the blooming youth had just begun to be visible in the body of Śankhachūda as if the God of Love incarnated in his body; his color resembled that of white *campakas* and all his body was decked with jewelled ornaments. His face resembled the autumnal full moon; his eyes were extended like the lotus leaves. The beautiful form was seen to sit in an excellent aerial car, made of pearls and jewels. Two jewel earrings, nice and elegant, suspended up to his cheek; his neck was adorned with Pārijāta flower garlands; and his body was smeared with *kunkum* and scented sandalwood paste. O Nārada! Seeing Śankhachūda coming near to her, Tulasī covered her face by her clothing and she, with a smiling

countenance, cast repeatedly sidelong glances at him and bent her head low abashed in the expectation of a fresh intercourse. How beautiful was that clear face of hers! It put down the autumnal moon in the background. Invaluable jewelled ornaments were on her toes. Her braid of hair was surrounded by sweet-scented Mālatī garlands. The invaluable jewelled wonderful earrings in the shape of a shark were hanging up to her cheek. Extraordinarily beautiful necklaces were seen being suspended to the middle of her breasts and added to the beauty thereof; on her arms and hand were jewelled bangles and conch ornaments; jewelled armlets and on fingers; excellent jewelled rings were seen. O Muni! Seeing that lovely beautiful chaste woman of good nature, Śankhachūda came to her and taking his seat addressed her as follows:

27. 'O proud one! O auspicious one! Who are you? Whose daughter are you? You look fortunate and blessed among women. I am your silent slave. Talk with me.'

28-30. That beautiful eyed Tulasī, full of love, replied to Śankhachūda with smiling countenance and face bent low: 'I am the daughter of the great king Vṛṣadhvaja. I have come to this forest for *tapasyā* and am engaged in this. Who are you? What business have you to talk with me? You can go away wherever you like. I have heard in the *śāstras* that persons born of a noble family never speak with ladies of a respectable family in privacy.

31-71. Only those that are lewd, void of any knowledge in the *dharma-śāstras*, void of the Vedic knowledge and who are not *kulīnas*, like to speak with women in privacy. And those woman, too, that look externally beautiful but very passionate and the death of males, who are sweet tongued but filled with venom in their hearts, those who are sweet externally but like a sword internally, those that are always bent in achieving their own selfish ends and those that become obedient to their husbands for their own selfish ends otherwise behaving as they like, those that are filled inside with dirty things and outside looking pleasant in their faces and eyes, whose characters are pronounced as defiled, what intelligent, learned and noble-minded man can trust them? Those women

do not discriminate who are their friends or who are their enemies; they want always new persons. Whenever they see a man well dressed, they want to satisfy their own passions. And they pretend with great care that they are very chaste. They are the vessels of passion; they always attract the minds of others and they are very enthusiastic in satisfying their own lust. They verbally show that they want other men to go away but at hearts, feelings for intercourse remain preponderant; whenever they see their paramours in private, they laugh and become very glad but externally their shame, knows no bounds. When they do not have intercourse with their paramours, they become self-conceited; their bodies burn with anger and they begin to quarrel. When their passions are satisfied fully, they become glad and when there is a deficiency in that, they become sorrowful. For the sake of good and sweet food and cold drinks, they want beautiful young persons, qualified and humorous. They consider witty young persons clever in holding intercourses, more dearly than their sons. And if that beloved one becomes incapable or aged, then he is considered as an enemy. Quarrels and anger then ensue. They devour these men as serpents eat rats. They are boldness personified and they are the source of all evils and vices. Even Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa remain deluded before them. They cannot find out any clue of their minds. They are the greatest obstacle in the path of *tapasyā* and the closed doors for liberation. Devotion to Hari cannot reach those women. They are the repositories of Māyā and they hold men fast by iron chains in this word. They are like magicians and false like dreams. They enchant others by external beauty; their lower parts are very ugly and filled with excrements, faeces, of foul scent and very unholy and smeared with blood. The creator Bhagavān has created them as such, the Māyā to the Māyāvis and the venom to those who want liberation, and as invisible to those that want to have them.' Thus saying, Tulasī stopped.

O Nārada! Śankhachūda, then smilingly addressed her as follows: 'O Devī! What you have spoken is not wholly false; partly it is true and partly it is false. Now hear. The creator has created this all-enchanting female form into two parts. One is praiseworthy and the other is not. He has created Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Durgā, Sāvitrī and Rādhā and others as the primary

causes of creation; so there are the prime creations: Those women that are born of their parts, are auspicious, glorious and much praiseworthy. Śatarūpā, Devahūtī, Svadhā, Svāhā, Dakśiṇā Chhāyāvatī, Rohinī, Varunānī, Śachī, the wife of Kuvera, Diti, Aditi, Lopāmudrā, Anasūyā, Kautabhī (Kotarī), Tulasī, Ahalyā, Arundhatī, Menā, Tarā, Mandodarī, Damayantī, Vedavatī, Gaṅgā, Manasā, Pusti, Tusti, Smṛti, Medhā, Kālikā, Vasundharā, Śāsthī, Maṅgalachandī, Mūrti, wife of Dharma. Svasti, śraddhā; śānti, Kānti, Ksānti, Nidrā, Tandrā, Ksudhā, Pipāsā, Sandhyā, Rātri, Divā, Sampatti, Dhriti, Kīrtī, Krīyā, Śobhā, Prabhā, Śivā, and other women born of the Prime Prakṛtis, all are excellent in every *yuga*. The prostitutes of the heavens are also born of the above women in their parts and parts of parts. They are not praiseworthy in the universe; they are all regarded as unchaste women. Those women that are of *sāttva-guṇa* are all excellent and endowed with influence. In the universe they are good, chaste and praiseworthy. This is not false. The Pandits declare them excellent. Those that are of *rājo-guṇa* and *tāmo-guṇa* are not so praiseworthy. Those women that are of *rājo-guṇa* are known as middling. They are always fond of enjoyments, yield to them, and always ready to achieve their own ends. These women are generally insincere, delusive, and outside the pale of religious duties. Therefore they are generally unchaste. The Pandits consider them as middling. Those women that are of *tāmo-guṇa* are considered as worst.

Those born of noble families, can never speak with others wives in a private place or when they are alone. By Brahmā's command I have come to you. O fair one! I will marry you now according to the Gandharva method. My name is Śankhachūda. The Devas fly away from me out of terror. Before I was the intimate *śakhā* (friend) of Śrī Hari, by the name of Sudāmā. Now, by Rādhikā's curse I am born in the family of the Dānavas. I was a *pārisad* (attendant) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the chief of the eight *gopas*. Now, by Rādhikā's curse I am born as Śankhachūda, the Indra of the Dānavas. By Śrī Kṛṣṇa's grace and by His *mantra*, I am *jātismarā* (know of my past births). You, too, are *jātismarā* Tulasī. Śrī Kṛṣṇa enjoyed you before. By

Rādhikā's anger, you are now born in Bhārata. I was very eager to enjoy you then; out of Rādhikā's fear I could not.'

72-87. Thus saying, Śankhachūda stopped. Then Tulasī gladly and smilingly replied: 'Such persons (like you) are famous in this world; good women desire such husbands. Really, I am now defeated by you in argument. The man who is conquered by woman is very impure and blamed by the community. The Pitri-lokas, the Deva-lokas, and the Gandharva-loka, too, look upon men overpowered by women as mean, despicable. Even father, mother, brother, etc., hate them mentally. It is said in the *Vedas* that the impurities during birth and death are expiated by ten days' observances for the Brāhmaṇas, by twelve days' observances for the Kṣatriyas, by fifteen days' observances for the Vaiśyas and by one month's observances for the Śūdras and other low castes. But the impurity of the man who is conquered by women cannot be expiated by any other means except his dead body being burned in the funeral pyre. The Pitṛs never accept willingly the *piṇḍas* and offerings of water (*tarpanas*) offered by the women-conquered men. So much so that the Devas even hesitate to accept flowers, water, etc., offered by them on their names. Those whose hearts are entirely subdued by men, do not acquire any fruits from their knowledge, *tapasyā*, *japam*, fire sacrifices, worship, learning and fame. I tested you to ascertain your strength in learning. It is highly advisable to choose one's husband by examining his merits and defects. Sin equivalent to the murder of a Brāhmaṇa is committed if one gives in marriage one's daughter to one void of all qualifications, to an old man, to one who is ignorant, to a poor, illiterate, diseased, ugly, very angry, very harsh, lame, devoid of limbs, deaf, dumb, inanimate and who is impotent. If one gives in marriage a daughter to a young man of good character, learned, well qualified and of a peaceful temper, one acquires the fruits of performing ten horse sacrifices. If one nourishes a daughter and sells her out of greed for money, one falls to the Kumbhīpāka hell. That sinner drinks the urine and eats the excrements of that daughter, remaining in that hell. For a period equal to the fourteen Indra's lifetimes they are bitten by worms and crows. At the expiry of this period, they will have to be born in this world of men as

diseased persons. In their human births they will have to earn their livelihood by selling flesh and carrying flesh.'

88-100. Thus saying, when Tulasī stopped, Brahmā appeared on the scene and addressed Śankachūda: 'O Śankhachūda! Why are you spending uselessly your time in vain talks with Tulasī? Marry her soon by the Gandharva method. As you are a gem amongst males, so She is a gem amongst females. It is a very happy union between a humorous lover and a humorous beloved. O King! Who despises the great happiness when it is at one's hand? He who forsakes the pleasure is worse than a beast in this world. O Tulasī! And what for are you testing the nobly qualified person who is the tormentor of the Devas, Asuras and Dānavas? O child! As Lakṣmī Devī is of Nārāyaṇa, as Rādhikā is of Kṛṣṇa; as is My Sāvītrī, as Bhava's is Bhavānī, as Boar's is Earth, as Yajña's is Daksīnā, Atri's Anasūyā, Gautama's Ahalyā, Moon's Rohinī, Bṛhaspati's Tārā, Manu's śatarūpā, Kandarpa's Rati, Kaśyapa's Aditi, Vasiṣṭha's Arundhatī, Kardama's Devahūti, Fire's Svāhā, Indra's Śachī, Gaṇeśa's Pusti, Skanda's Devasenā, and Dharma's Mūrti, so let you be the dear wife of Śankhachūda. Let you remain with Śankhachūda, beautiful as he is, for a long time, and enjoy with him in various places as you like. When Śankhachūda will quit his mortal frame, you would go to Goloka and enjoy easily with the two-armed Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and in Vaikuṇṭha with the four-armed Kṛṣṇa and with great gladness'."

Here ends the Eighteenth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the union of Śankhachūda with Tulasī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIX—Devas go to Vaikuṇṭha after Tulasī's Marriage with Śankhachūda

1. Nārada said: "O Bhāgavān! Wonderful is the story that has been now recited by you. My ears are not satisfied. So tell me what happened afterwards."

2-94. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! The creator Brahmā, blessing them, departed to His own abode. The Dānava married Tulasī under the Gandharva method. The celestial drums sounded and flowers were showered. In the beautiful lovely house the Dānavendra, remained in perfect enjoyment. Tulasī, too, being busy with fresh intercourse, became almost mad after them. The chaste Tulasī and Śankhachūda both became deeply immersed in the ocean of bliss in their sexual union, and began to enjoy sixty-four sorts of amorous sports. In the *śāstras* on love affairs, all the connections of limbs with limbs that are described, as the lover and the loved desire, they both enjoyed those with perfect freedom and pleasure. The place was solitary; to add to it, the scenery was grand and lovely; so nothing remained untasted of the several tastes of amorous pleasures. On the banks of the river, in flower-gardens, they slept on the flower beds smeared with sandalwood paste and enjoyed the amorous pleasures. Both were adorned with jeweled ornaments; both were skilled in amorous practices; so no one desisted.

The chaste Tulasī out of her nimbleness due to youth, easily stole into the heart of her husband. Śankhachūda, too, a great expert in knowing other's amorous sentiments, attracted the heart of Tulasī. Tulasī obliterated the sandalwood marks from the breast of the King and the sign of tilak from his nose. The King also wiped away the dot of Sindur and Alakā (vermillion) marks from Tulasī's forehead and put marks of nails on her round plump breasts. Tulasī also hurt the King's left side by her bracelets. Then the King bit the lips of Tulasī. Thus each one embraced the other, kissed each other and each one began to massage the thighs, legs, etc. When both of them thus spent their time in amorous sports, they got up and began to dress themselves as they desired. Tulasī smeared Śankhachūda's nose with red sandalwood paste mixed with *kunkum* (saffron), smeared his body with sweet-scented sandalwood paste, offered sweet-scented betels in his mouth, made him put on celestial garments (fireproof; brought from Fire) put unto his neck the wonderful garland of Pārijāta flowers, destructive of disease and old age, invaluable jewel rings on his hand and offering him excellent gems, rare in the three worlds, said:

'O Lord! I am your maidservant,' and uttering this repeatedly bowed down to the feet of her husband with devotion. She then got up and with smiling countenance began to look on his face with a steadfast gaze. King Śankhachūda then attracted his dear Tulasī to his breast and took off the veil fully from her face and began to look on that, next moment he kissed on her cheek and lips and gave her a pair of garments brought from the Varuṇa's house, a necklace of jewels, hard to get in the three worlds, the tinklets of Svāhā, the wife of Agṇi, the Keyura (armlets) of the Sun's wife Chhāyā, the two earrings of Rohinī, the wife of the Moon, the finger rings of Rati, the wife of Kāmadeva, and the wonderfully beautiful conch, given by Viśvakarmā, excellent bedding studded with pearls and jewels and various ornaments; and when he gave her all these things, he smiled. The king then put garlands on Tulasī's braid of hair, nicely variegated *alakās* on her cheek, three crescent lines of sweet-scented sandalwood paste within the *alakās*, dots of saffron all around that, the brilliant *sindura* mark looking like a flame, and red *āltā* on the feet and toes; he then placed those feet on his breast and utterred repeatedly: 'I am your servant,' and then held her on his breast.

They then left the hermitage in that state, and began to travel in various places. In the Malaya Mountain, in mountains after mountains, in solitary flower gardens, in the mountain caves, in beautiful sea-beaches, on the banks of the Puspabhadrā river, cool with watery breeze, in various rivers and riversides, in Vispandana forest echoed with sweet songs of the birds of the vernal season. They then went from Vispandana forest to the Surasana forest, from the Surasana forest to the Nandana forest, from the Nandana forest to the nice Chhandana forests, from Chhandana forest to Campaka, Ketakī; Mādhavī Kuṇḍa, Mālatī, and Kumuda and lotus forests; thence they went to the forest of desire-gratifying trees (Kalpavṛksa forest,) and Pārijāta trees. They then went to the solitary place Kānchan, thence to the Kānchī (forest) they then went to the Kīñjalaka forest, thence to the Kānchanākar (the gold mine), thence to Kanchuka and various other forests echoed with the sweet sounds of cuckoos.

There, on beds strewn with flowers and scented with sandalwood paste they both enjoyed each other to their hearts content and with great pleasure. But neither of them, either Śankhachūda or Tulasī, got quenched with their thirst. Rather their passions were inflamed like the fire on which clarified butter is poured in sacrifices. The King of the Dānavas, then, brought Tulasī to his own kingdom and there, in his own beautiful garden house, incessantly enjoyed her. Thus the powerful king of the Dānavas passed away one *manvantara* in the enjoyment of his kingdom. He spread his sway over the Devatās, Asuras, Dānavas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras and Rākṣasas.

The Devas, dispossessed of their realms, wandered everywhere like beggars. At last they united in a body and went to the Brahmā's assembly, and there they began to cry and then related the whole history how the Dānava Śankhachūda oppressed them. Hearing all this, Brahmā took them to Śaṅkara and informed Him of the whole history of the case. When Mahādeva heard all this, He took them all to the highest place, Vaikuṇṭha devoid of old age and death. Going towards the first entrance of Nārāyaṇa's abode, they saw the gate-keepers watching the gate, taking their seats on jewel thrones. They all looked brilliant, clothed with the yellow garments, adorned with jeweled ornaments, garlanded with forest flowers, all of *śyāmasundara* (dark blue, very beautiful) bodies. They were four-armed, holding on their hands conch, mace, discus and lotus; sweet smile was on their faces and eyes beautiful like lotus leaves. On Brahmā asking them for entrance to the assembly, they nodded their assent. He, then, accompanied by the Devas, passed one by one, sixteen gates and at last came before Nārāyaṇa. On reaching there, He saw that the assembly was completely filled with Devaṛṣis, and four-armed Nārāyaṇ-like *pārisadas* (attendants), decked with Kaustuba jewels. The sight of the *sabhā* (assembly) makes one think that the Moon has just arisen, shedding effulgent rays all round. By the will of Śrī Hari, excellent diamonds, invaluable gems and necklaces of gems and jewels were placed at various places. At other places rows of pearls were shedding their splendor and brilliance like the garlands of gems and jewels. At others, the mirrors were

placed in a circle; and at various other places, the endless wonderful artistic picture lines were drawn. Again at other places the jewels called Padmarāgas were artistically arranged as if the lotuses were there spreading their lustrous beauty all around. At many other places rows of steps were made of wonderful Syamantaka jewels. All around the assembly, there were the excellent pillars, built of Indranīlam jewels. Over those pillars, sandalwood leaves strung on strings from to pillar to pillar, were suspended. Golden jars, all brimful with water were located at various places. All around, garlands of Pārijāta flowers were seen. The hall was decorated with sweet-scented sandalwood trees, red like saffron and musk. Sweet scents were being emitted all round. The Vidyadhāris were dancing at places. The assembly hall measured one thousand *yojanas*. Countless servants were engaged all over on various works.

Brahmā, Śaṅkara and the other Gods saw there Śrī Hari seated in the center on an invaluable jeweled throne, as a Moon looks surrounded by stars. There was a crown on His head, earrings on His ears; garlands made of wild flowers were on his neck, His body was smeared all over with sandalwood paste and He was holding Kelipadma (a sort of lotus) in His hand. He was seeing, with a smiling countenance, the dancing and music before Him. He was full of peace, the Lord of Sarasvatī. Lakṣmī was holding gently His lotus feet and He was chewing the sweet scented betel offered by Her. Gaṅgā also was fanning Him devotedly with a white *chāmara* and the others were singing hymns to Him with their heads bent low with devotion. Brahmā and the other Gods all bowed down to Him; their bodies were all filled with *pulaka* (excessive joy causing hair stand on end); tears flowed from their eyes and their voices were choked out of emotion.

The creator Brahmā, then, with clasped hands informed Him, with head bowed down, of the whole history of Śankhachūda. Hearing this, the omniscient Hari, knowing the minds of all, smiled and spoke to Brahmā all the interesting secrets: 'O Lotus born! I know all about Śankhachūda. He

was in his previous birth My great devotee, an energetic *gopa*. Now I speak to you the ancient history of Goloka; hear.

This story about Goloka is sin-destroying and highly meritorious. Śankhachūda, in his previous birth was the *gopa* Sudāmā, My chief *pārisad* (attendant). He has now become a Dānava on account of the dire curse pronounced by Śrī Rādhā. One day when I went from My abode, accompanied by Virajā *gopī*, to the *rāsa-maṇḍala*, My beloved Rādhā, hearing this news from a maidservant, came up at once with Her whole host of *sakhīs* wrathful, to the *rāsa-maṇḍala* (ball dance in Goloka) and not being able to see Me, saw Virajā turned into a river, She thought that I had disappeared. So She went back to Her own abode with Her *sakhīs*. But when I returned to the house with Sudāmā, Rādhā rebuked Me very much. I remained silent. But Sudāmā could not bear and he rebuked Rādhā in My presence, a thing quite intolerable to Her dignity! On hearing this rebuke, Rādhā's eyes became red with anger and She immediately ordered Her *sakhīs* to drive him away. Sudāmā began to tremble with fear. Immediately on Her command *lakhs* and *lakhs* of *sakhīs* got up immediately and drove that hot irresistible Sudāmā away. Sudāmā repeated his chafings and roarings. On hearing these, She cursed him: "You better be born in the womb of a Dānavī." Hearing the terrible curse, Sudāmā bowed down to Me and went away crying; then Rādhā, who was all-mercy, became melted with mercy. And She prevented him repeatedly, not to go away. Rādhā wept and told him, "O child! Wait. Where are you going? No more you will have to go; return." Thus saying She became very distressed. The *gopas* and *gopīs* also began to weep.

I then explained to them, "In about half a moment Sudāmā will come back, fulfilling the conditions of the curse. O Sudāmā! Come here when the curse expires." Then he appeased Rādhā also. "Know that one moment (*ksan*) in Goloka is equal to one *manvantara* on earth. The *yogī* Śankhachūda, expert in Māyā and very powerful will soon return from the earth. Take this My weapon *śūla* and go early to Bhārata. Śiva will slay the Dānava by this *śūlāstra*. The Dānava holds always on his neck My auspicious *kavaca* and

will therefore become the conqueror of the universe. No one will he able to kill him as long as be holds the above *kavaca*. So, first of all, I will go to him in the form of a Brāhmaṇa and ask from him the *kavaca*. O creator! Thou also didst give him the boon that his death would occur when the chastity of of his wife would be destroyed. I will go and hold intercourse with his wife. Then his death will occur without fail. His wife after her death will come and become My dearest wife.' Thus saying, Nārāyaṇa gave over to Mahādeva the *śūlāstra*. Then He went gladly to His inner compartments. On the other hand, Brahmā and Rudra and the other Devas incarnated themselves in Bhārata."

Here ends the Nineteenth Chapter on the going of the Devas to Vaikuṇṭha after Tulasī's marriage with Śankhachūda in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XX—War of Śankhachūda with the Devas

1-21. Nārāyaṇa said: "Brahmā, then putting Śiva to the task of killing Śankhachūda went to His own abode. The other Devas returned to their homes. Here under a beautiful *bata* tree, on the banks of the river Chandrabhāgā, Mahādeva pitched His big tent and encamped Himself to get the victory for the Devas. He then sent Citraratha, the Lord of the Gandharvas, as a messenger to Śankhachūda, the Lord of the Dānavas. By the command of Mahādeva, Citraratha went to the city of the king of Daityas, more beautiful than Indra's place and more wealthy than the mansion of Kuvera. The city was five *yojanas* wide and twice as much in length. It was built of crystals of pearls and jewels. There were roadways on all sides. There were seven trenches, hard to be crossed, one after another, encircling the city. The city was built of countless rubies and gems, brilliant like flames. There were hundreds of roadways and markets and stalls, in the wonderful *vedis* (raised platforms) built of jewels. All around were splendid palatial buildings of traders and merchantmen, filled with various articles. There were hundreds and *kotis* of beautiful buildings, adorned with various ornaments and built of variegated red stones looking

like *sindūras*. Thus he went on and saw, in the middle, the building of Śankhachūda, circular like the lunar sphere. Four ditches all filled with fiery flames, encircled his house one after another. So the enemies could not in any way cross them; but the friend could easily go there. On the top were seen turrets built of jewels, rising high to the heavens. The gate-keepers were watching the twelve gates. In the center were situated *lakhs* and *lakhs* of excellent jewel-built houses. In every room there were jewelled steps and staircases, and the pillars were all built of gems, jewels and pearls.

Puspadanta (Citraratha) saw all this and then went to the first gate and saw one terrible person, copper-colored, with tawny eyes, sitting with a trident in his hand with a smiling countenance. He told he had come as a messenger and got his entrance. Thus Citraratha went one afer another to all the entries, not being prohibited at all though he told that he had come as a messenger on war service. The Gandharva reached one after another, the last door and said: 'O doorkeeper! Go quickly and inform the Lord of the Dānavas all about the impending war.' When the messenger had spoken thus, the gatekeeper allowed him to go inside. Going inside, the Gandarva saw Śankhachūda, of excellent form, seated in the middle of the royal assembly on a golden throne. One servant was holding an umbrella over the king's head, decked with divine excellent gems, the inner rod of the umbrella being made up of jewels, and decorated with expanded artificial flowers made of gems. The attendants were fanning him with beautiful white *cāmaras;* he was nicely dressed, beautiful and lovely and adorned with jeweled ornaments. He was nicely garlanded, and wore fine celestial garments. Three *koti* Dānavas were surrounding him; and seven *koti* Dānavas, all armed, were walking to and fro.

22-53. Puspadanta was thunderstruck when he saw thus the Dānava and he addressed him thus: 'O King! I am a servant of Śiva; My name is Puspadanta; hear what Śiva has commanded me to tell you. You better now give back, to the Devas, the rights that they had before. The Devas went to Śrī Hari and had taken His refuge. Śrī Hari gave over to Śiva one *śūla*

weapon and asked the Devas to depart. At present, the three-eyed Deva is residing under the shade of a *bata* tree on the banks of the Puspabhadrā river. He told me to speak this to you, “Either give over to the Devas their rights, or fight with me. Please reply and I will speak to Him accordingly.”

Śankhachūda, hearing the messenger’s words laughed and said, “Tomorrow morning I will start, ready for war. Better go away today.” The messenger went back to Śiva and replied to Him accordingly. In the meantime the following personages joined Śiva and remained seated on excellent aerial cars, built of jewels and gems: Skanda, Vīrabhadra, Nandī, Mahākāla, Subhadraka, Viśālāksa, Bāna, Piṅgalāksa, Vikampana, Virūpa, Vikriti, Maṇibhadra, Vāskāla, Kapilāksa, Dīrgha Dangstra, Vikata, Tāmralochana, Kālākantha, Balībhadra, Kālajīhba, Kutīchara, Balonmatta, Ranaślāghī, Durjaya, Durgama, (these eight Bhairavas), eleven Rudras, eight Vasus, Indra, the twelve *ādityas*, fire, moon, Viśvakarmā, the two Aśvins, Kuvera, Yama, Jayanta, Nala Kūbara, Vāyu, Varuṇa, Budha, Maṅgala, Dharma, śanī, Iśāna, the powerful Kāmadeva. Ugradamstrā, Ugrachandā, Kotarā, Kaitabhī, and the eight-armed terrible Devī Bhadrakālī. Kālī wore the bloody red clothings and She smeared red sandalwood paste all over Her body. Dancing, laughing; singing songs in tune, very jolly, She bids Her devotees discard all fear, and terrifies the enemies. Her lip is terrible, lolling, and extends to one *yojana*. On Her eight arms She holds conch, disc, mace, lotus, axe, skin, bow and arrows. She was holding in Her hands, the bowl-shaped human skull; that was very deep and one *yojana* wide. Her trident reached up to the Heavens; Her weapon called Śakti (dart) extended to one *yojana*. Besides there were *mudgara* (mace), *musala* (club), *vajra* (thunderbolt), *kheta* (club), brilliant *phalaka* (shield), the Vaiṣṇava weapon, the Varuṇa weapon, the *āgneyāstra* (a fire weapon), *nāgapāśa* (the noose of serpents), the *nārāyaṇāstra*, Gandharva weapons, Brahmā’s weapons, the Garudāstram, the Pārjanayāstram, the Pāśupatāstram, the Jrimbhañāstram, the Pārvatāstram, the Maheśvarāstram, the Vāyavyāstram, the Sanmohanam rod and various other infallible divine weapons. Besides hundreds of other divine weapons were with Her.

Three *kotis* of Yogīnīs and three *kotis* and a half of terrible Dākinīs were attending Bhadrakālī. Bhūtas (demons), Pretas, Piśāchas, Kusmāndas, Brahma Rākṣasas, Rākhsasas, Vetālas, Yakṣas and Kinnaras also were there in countless numbers. At this time Kārtikeya came there and bowed down to his father Mahādeva. He asked him to take his seat on His left side and asked him to help. Then the army remained there in military array. On the other hand, when Śiva's messenger departed, Śankhachūda went to the *zenana* and informed Tulasī of the news of an impending war. No sooner She heard than her throat and lips and palate became dried. She then with a sorrowful heart spoke in sweet words: "O my Lord! O my Friend! O the ruler of My life! Wait for a moment and take your seat on My heart. Instil life in Me for a moment. Satisfy My desire of human birth. Let me behold you fully so that my eyes be satisfled. My breath is now very agitated. I saw by the end of the night one bad dream. Therefore I feel an internal burning."

Thus at the words of Tulasī, the king Śankhachūda finished his meals and began to address her, in good and true words, beneficent to her: 'O My Lady! It is *kāla*, time that brings out these various combinations by which the *karmik* fruit is enjoyed; it is *kāla* that awards auspicious and inauspicious things; *kāla* is the sole master to impart pain, fear, and good and bad things.

54-84. Trees grow up in time; their branches, etc., come out in time; flowers appear in time and fruits come out in time. Fruits are ripen in time and after giving the fruits, they die out also in time. O fair one! The universe comes into existence in time and dies away in time. The creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe are creating, preserving and destroying the worlds with the help of time. Time guides them in every way. But the highest Prakṛti is the God of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśa (i.e., the creatrix of time). This highest Prakṛti, the highest God is creating, preserving and destroying this universe. She makes time dance. By Her mere will, She has converted Her inseparable Prakṛti into Māyā and is thus creating all things, moving and unmoving. She is the ruler of all; the form of all, and She is the

highest God. By Her is being done this creation of persons by persons, this preservation of persons by persons, and this destruction of persons by persons.

So you better now take refuge of the Highest Lord. Know it is by Her command the wind is blowing, by Her command the Sun is giving heat in due time, by Her command Indra is showering rains; by Her command, Death is striding over the beings; by Her command fire is burning all things and by Her command the cooling Moon is revolving. She is the death of death, the time of time, Yama of Yama (the God of death), the fire of Fire and the destroyer of the Destroyer. So take Her refuge. You cannot find and fix who is whose friend in the world; so pray to Her, the highest God, Who is the Friend of all.

Oh! Who am I? And who are you either? The creator is the combiner of us two and so He will dissociate us two by our *karma*. When difficulty arises, the ignorant fools become overwhelmed with sorrow; but the intelligent Paṇḍitas do not get at all deluded or become distressed. By the wheel of time, the beings are led sometimes into happiness; sometimes into pain. You will certainly get Nārāyaṇa for your husband; for which you practiced *tapas* before, in the hermitage of Badari (the source of the Ganges, the feet of Viṣṇu). I pleased Brahmā by my *tapasyā* and have, by his boon, got you as my wife. But the object for which you did your *tapasyā, that* you may get Hari as your husband; will certainly be fulfilled. You will get Govinda in Vṛṇḍāvana and in the region of Goloka. I will also go there when I forsake this, my demon body. Now I am talking with you here; afterwards we will meet again in the region of Goloka. By the curse of Rādhikā, I have come to this Bhārata, hard to be attained. You, too, will quit this body and, assuming the divine form will go to Śrī Hari. So, O beloved! You need not be sorry."

O Muni! Thus these conversations took them the whole day and led them to the evening time. The king of the demons, Śankhachūda then slept with Tulasī on a nicely decorated bed, strewn with flowers, and smeared with sandalwood paste, in the *ratna-mandir* (temple built of jewels.) This jewel

temple was adorned with various wealth and riches. The jewel lamps were lighted. Śankhachūda passed the night with his wife in various sports. The thin-bellied Tulasī was weeping with a very sorrowful heart, without having taken any food. The king, who knew the reality of existence, took her to his breast and appeased her in various ways. What religious instructions he had received in Bhāndīra forest from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, those *tattvas*, capable to destroy all sorrows and delusions, he now spoke carefully to Tulasī. Then Tulasī's joy knew no bounds. She then began to consider everything as transient and began to play with a gladdened heart. Both became drowned in the ocean of bliss; and the bodies of both of them were filled with joy and the hairs stood on their ends. Both of them, then, desirous to have amorous sports, joined themselves and became like Ardhanāriśvara and so one body. As Tulasī considered Śankhachūda to be her lord, so the Dānava King considered Tulasī the darling of his life. They became senseless with pleasureable feelings arising out of their amorous intercourse. Next moment they regained their tenaciousness and both began to converse on amorous matters. Thus both spent their time sometimes in sweet conversations, sometimes laughing and joking, sometimes maddened with amorous sentiments. As Śankhachūda was clever in amorous affairs, so Tulasī was very expert. So none felt satiated with love affairs and no one was defeated by the other."

Here ends the Twentieth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the war preparations of Śankhachūda with the Devas in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXI—Conflict of Mahādeva and Śankhachūda

1-33. Śrī Nārāyaṇa spoke: "Then the Dānava, the devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, got up from his flower-strewn bed, meditating on Śrī Kṛṣṇa, early in the morning at the *brahma-muhūrta*. Quitting his night dress, he took his bath in pure water and put on fresh washed clothing. He then put the bright *tilak* mark on his forehead and, performing the daily necessary worship, he worshipped his *iṣṭā-devatā* (The Deity doing good to him). He then saw the

auspicious things such as curd, ghee, honey, fried rice, etc., and distributed as usual to the Brāhmaṇas the best jewels, pearls, clothing and gold. Then for his marching to turn out auspicious, he gave at the feet of his Gurudeva priceless gems, jewels, pearls, diamonds, etc., and finally he gave to the poor Brāhmaṇas with great gladness, elephants, horses, wealth, thousands of stores, two *lakhs* of cities and one hundred *kotis* of villages. He then gave over to his son the charge of his kingdom and of his wife, and all the dominions, wealth, property, all the servants and maidservants, all the stores and conveyances. He dressed himself for the war and took up bows, arrows and arrow cases. By the command of the King, the armies began to gather. Three *lakhs* of horses, one *lakh* elephants, one *ayuta* chariots, three *kotis* of bowmen, three *kotis* armored soldiers and three *kotis* of trident holders got themselves ready. Then the King counted his forces and appointed one Commander-in-Chief, (Mahāratha), skilled in arts of warfare, over the whole army.

Thus the generals were apppointed over the three *lakh* Aksauhinī forces and their provisions were collected by three hundred Aksauhinī men. He, then, thinking of Śrī Hari, started for war, accompanied by his vast army.

(Note: One Aksauhinī consists of a large army consisting of 21,870 chariots, as many elephants, 65,610 horses, and 109,350 foot).

He then mounted on a chariot built of excellent jewels and, headed by his *guru* and all his other elders, went to Śaṅkara. O Nārada! Bhagavān Mahādeva was at that time staying on the banks of Puspabhadra. That place was Sidhāśrama (the hermitage where the yogik successes had been obtained and can easily be acquired in future for the *siddhas* as well: a *siddha-kṣetra*). It was the place where the Muni Kapila practiced *tapasyā*, in the holy land of Bhārata. It was bounded on the east by the western ocean, on the west by the Malaya Mountain, on the south, by the Śrī Śaila mountain and on the north by the Gandhamādana Mountain. It was five *yojanas* wide and one hundred times as long. This auspicious river in Bhārata yields great religious merits and is always full of clear, sparkling running water. She is the favorite wife of the salt ocean and She is very

blessed. Issuing from Sarāvatī Himālayas, She drops into the ocean. Keeping the river Gomatī on her left; She falls into the west ocean.

Śankhachūda, arriving there, saw Mahādeva under a Peepul tree near its root with a smiling countenance, like one *koti* Suns, seated in a *yogik* posture. His color was white like a pure crystal; as if the fire of Brahman was emitting from every pore of His body (burning with *brahma-teja*). He was wearing the tiger skin and holding the trident and axe. He dispels the fear of death of His *bhaktas;* His face is quite calm. He, the Lord of Gaurī, is the giver of the fruits of *tapasyā* and of all sons, wealth and prosperity. The smiling face of *āśutosa* (one who is pleased quickly) is always thinking of the welfare of the *bhaktas;* He is the Lord of the universe, the seed of the universe, the all-form (all-pervading), and the progenitor of the universe. He is omnipresent, all-pervading, the best in this universe, the destroyer of this universe, the cause of all causes, and the savior from the hells. He is the awakener and bestower of knowledge, the seed of all knowledge, and He Himself is of the nature of knowledge and bliss. Seeing that eternal Puruṣa, the King of the Dānavas at once descended from his chariot and bowed down with devotion to Him, to Bhadra Kālī on His left and to Kārtikeya on His front. The other attendants did the same. Śaṅkara, Bhadra Kālī and Skanda all blessed him. Nandiśvara and others got up from their seats on seeing the Dānava King, and began to talk with each other on that subject. The King addressed Śiva and sat by Him.

Bhagavān Mahādeva, the tranquil Self, then spoke to him, thus: 'O King! Brahmā, the knower of *dharma* and the creator of the world, is the father of *dharma*. The religious Marīchi, a devotee of Viṣṇu, is the son of Brahmā. The religious Prajāpati Kaśyapa is also Brahmā's son. Dakṣa gladly gave over his thirteen daughters to Kaśyapa in marriage. Danu, fortunate and chaste, is also one of them.

34-64. Danu had forty sons, all spirited and known as Dānavas. The powerful Vipracitti was the prominent amongst them. Vipracitti's son was Dambha, self-controlled and very much devoted to Viṣṇu. So much so that for one *lakh* years he recited the Viṣṇu *mantra* at Puṣkara. His *guru* (spiritual

teacher) was Śukrāchārya; and, by his advice, he recited the *mantra* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the highest Self. He got you as his son, devoted to Kṛṣṇa. In your former birth, you were the chief attendant *gopa* (cowherd) of Kṛṣṇa. You were very religious. Now, by Rādhikā's curse, you are born in Bhārata as the Lord of the Dānavas: powerful, heroic, valorous, and chivalrous. All the things from Brahmā down to a blade of grass, the Vaiṣṇavas regard as very trifling; even if they get *sālokya, sārsti, sāyujya* and *sāmīpya* of Hari, they do not care a straw for that. Without serving Hari, they do not accept those things, even if those are thrust on them. Even Brahmāhood and immortality, the Vaiṣṇavas count for nothing. They want to serve Hari (Sevā-bhāva). Indrahood, Manuhood, they do not care.

You, too, are a real Kṛṣṇa Bhakta. So what do you care for those things that belong to the Devas, that are something like false to you. Give back to the Devas their kingdoms and please Me. Let the Devas remain in their own places, and let you enjoy your kingdom happily. No need now for further quarrels. Think that you all belong to the same Kaśyapa's family. The sins that are incurred, for example, the murder of a Brāhmaṇa, etc., are not even one-sixteenth of the sins incurred by hostilities amongst the relatives. If, O King! you think that by giving away to the Devas their possessions, your property will be diminished, then think that no one's days pass ever in one and the same condition. Whenever Prakṛti is dissolved, Brahmā also vanishes. Again He appears by the will of God. This occurs always. True, that knowledge is increased by true *tapasyā;* but memory fails then. This is certain. He who is the creator of this world, does his work of creation gradually by the help of his knowledge-power (Jñāṇa-Śakti). In the Satya-yuga, *dharma* reigns in full; in the Tretā-yuga, one quarter is diminished; again in the Dvāpara only one-half remains. And in the Kali-yuga, only one quarter remains. Thus *dharma* gets increase and decrease. At the end of the Kālī, the *dharma* will be seen very feeble as the phase of the Moon is seen very thin on the Dark Moon night. See, again, the Sun is very powerful in summer; not so in winter. At midday the Sun is very hot; it does not remain so in the morning and evening. The Sun rises at one time; then he is considered as young at another time he becomes very powerful and at

another time he goes down. Again in times of distress (i.e., during the cloudy days) the Sun gets entirely obscured. When the Moon is devoured by Rāhu (in the Lunar Eclipse), the Moon quivers. Again when the Moon becomes liberated (i.e., when the eclipse passes away) She becomes bright again. In the Full-Moon night She becomes full but She does not remain so always. In the dark fortnight She wanes every day. In the bright fortnight She waxes every day. In the bright fortnight, the Moon becomes healthy and prosperous and in the dark fortnight, the Moon becomes thinner and thinner as if attacked with consumption. In the time of eclipse She becomes pale and in the cloudy weather, She is obscured. Thus the Moon also becomes powerful at one time and weak and pale at another time. Bali now resides in Pātāla, having lost all his fortunes; but, at some other time, he will become Devendra (the Lord of the Devas). This earth becomes at one time covered with grains and the resting-place of all beings; and, at another time, She becomes immersed under water. This universe appears at one time and disappears at another. Everything, moving or nonmoving, sometimes appears and again, at another time, disappears. Only Brahman, the Highest Self, remains the same. By His grace, I have got the name Mrityunjaya (conqueror of death). I, too, am witnessing many Prakṛtik dissolutions, I witnessed repeatedly many dissolutions and will in future, witness many dissolutions.

The Paramātman becomes of the nature of Prakṛti. Again it is He that is the Puruṣa (male principle). He is the Self; He is the individual soul (*jīva*). He thus assumes various forms. And, again, Lo! He is beyond all forms! He who always repeats His name and sings His glory, can conquer, at some occasion, death. He is not to come under the sway of this birth, death, disease, old age and fear. He has made Brahmā the creator, Viṣṇu the preserver and Me the destroyer. By His will, we are possessed of those influences and powers. O King! Having deputed Kāla, Agṇi and Rudra to do the destruction work, I Myself repeat only His name and sing His glory, day and night, incessantly. My name is, on that account, Mrityunjaya. By His knowledge power, I am fearless. Death flies away fast from Me as serpents fly away at the sight of Garūda, the Vinatā's son.'

O Nārada! Thus saying, Śambhu, the Lord of all, the Progenitor of all, remained silent. Hearing the above words of Śambhu, the King thanked Mahādeva again and again and spoke in sweet humble words.

65-74. Śankhachūda said: 'The words spoken by Thee are quite true. Still I am speaking a few words. Kindly hear. Thou hast spoken just now that very great sins are incurred by kindred hostilities. How is it, then, that He robbed Bali of his whole possessions and sent him down into Pātāla? Gadādhara Viṣṇu could not recover Bali's glory. But I have done that. Why did the Devas kill Hiraṇyākṣa and Hiraṅyākaśipu, Śumbha and the other Dānavas? In bygone days, we labored hard when the nectar was obtained out of the churning of the ocean; but the best fruit was reaped by the Devas only. However, all these point that this universe is but the mere sporting ground of Paramātman, who has become of the nature of Prakṛti (the polarities of the one and the same current to produce electric effects). Whomsoever He grants glory and fortune, he only gets that. The quarrel of the Devas and the Dānavas is eternal. Victory and defeat come to both the parties alternately. So it is not proper for Thee to come here in this hostility. For Thou art the God, of the nature of the highest Self. Before Thee, we both are equal. So it is a matter of shame, no doubt, for Thee to stand up against us in favor of the gods. The glory and fame that will result to Thee, if Thou art victorious, will not be so much as it will be if we get the victory. On the contrary the inglory and infamy that will result to Thee if Thou dost get dire defeat will be inconceivably much more than what would come to us if we are defeated; for we are low and Thou art great.'

75-79. Mahādeva laughed very much when he heard the Dānava's words and replied: 'O King! You are descended from the Brāhmaṇa family. So what shame shall I incur if I get defeat in this fighting against you? In former days, the fight took place between Madhu and Kaitabha; again between Hiraṅyakaśipu and Hiraṇyākṣa, and Śrī Hari. I also fought with the Asura Tripurā. Again the serious fight took place also between Śumbha and the other Daityas and the highest Prakṛti Devī, the ruler of all, and the

progenitrix of all and the destructrix of all. And then, you were the *pārisada* attendant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Highest Self.

80-82. So the Daityas that were killed before, cannot be compared with you. Then why shall I feel shame in fighting against you? I am sent here by Śrī Hari for saving the Devas. So either give back to the Devas their possessions, or fight with Me. No need in speaking thus quite useless talks.'

O Nārada! Thus speaking, Bhagavān Śaṅkara remained silent. Śankhachūda got up at once with his ministers."

Chapter XXII—the Fight between the Devas and Śankhachūda

1-75. Śrī Nārāyaṇa spoke: "Then the King of the Dānavas, very powerful, bowed down to Mahādeva and ascended on the chariot with his ministers. Mahādeva gave orders to His army to be ready at once. So did Śankhachūda. Terrible fight then ensued between Mahendra and Vṛṣaparvā, Bhāskara and Vipracitti, Niśākara and Dambha, between Kāla and Kāleśvara, between Agni and Gokarṇa, Kuvera and Kālakeya, between Viśvakarmā and Māyā, between Mṛtyu and Bhayamkar, between Yama and Samhāra, between Varuṇa and Vikamka, between Budha and Dhritapristha, between śani and Raktāksa, Jayanta and Ratnasāra, between the Vasus and Varchasas, between the two Aśvin Kumāras and Dīptimān, between Nalakūbara and Dhūmra, between Dharma and Dhurandhara, between Maṅgala and Usāksa, Bhānu and Śovākara, between Kandarpa and Pīthara, between the eleven *ādityas* and Godhāmukha, Chūrna and Khadgadhvaja, Kañchīmukha and Piṇḍa, Dhūmra and Nandī, between Viśva and Palāśa, between the eleven Rudras and the eleven Bhayamkaras, between Ugrachandā and the other Mahāmārīs and NandĪśvara and the other Dānavas.

The battlefield then assumed a grim aspect, as if the time of dissolution had come. Bhagavān Mahādeva sat under the *vata* (*peepul*) tree with Kārtikeya and Bhadrakālī. Śankhachūda, decked with jeweled ornaments, sat on the jewel throne, surrounded by *kotis* and *kotis* of Dānavas. The Śaṅkara's army got defeated at the hands of the Dānavas. The Devas, with cuts and wounds on their bodies, fled from the battlefield, terrified. Kārtikeya gave words "Don't fear" to the Devas and excited them. Only Skanda resisted the Dānava forces. In one moment he slew one hundred *aksauhinī* Dānava forces. The lotus-eyed Kālī also engaged in killing the Asuras. She became very angry and no sooner did She slay the Asura forces, than She began to drink their blood. She easily slew with Her one hand at every time put into Her mouth ten *lakhs*, and hundred *lakhs* and *kotis* and *kotis* of elephants. Thousands and thousands of headless bodies (*kavandhas*) came to be witnessed in the field. The bodies of the Dānavas were all cut and wounded by the arrows of Kārtikeya. They were all terrified and fled away. Only Vṛṣaparvā, Vipracitti, Dambha and Vikamkanah remained fighting with Skanda with heroic valor. Mahāmārī, too, did not show his back and he fought vigorously. By and by they all became very much confused and distressed, but they did not turn their backs. Seeing this terrible fight of Skanda, the Devas began to shower flowers. The killing of the Dānavas looked like a *prakṛtik* dissolution. Śankhachūda, then, began to shoot arrows from his chariot.

The shooting of arrows by the king seemed as if rains were being poured in by the clouds. Everything became pitch dark. Fires only were seen emitting their golden tongues. The Devas, Nandīśvara and others, fled away, terrified. Only Kārtikeya remained in the battlefield. Then Śankhachūda began to throw terrible showers and showers of mountains, snakes, stones and trees. So much so that Kārtikeya was covered by them as the Sun becomes obscured by fog. The demon King cut off the weighty quiver and the pedestal of Skanda and broke His chariot. By the divine weapons of the Dānava, the peacock (the vehicle) of Kārtikeya became exhausted. Kārtikeya threw one Śakti (weapon) on the breast of the Dānava; but before it fell, the Dānava cut it off, lustrous like the Sun and in return, darted his

Śakti. By that stroke, Kārtikeya became stunned for a moment; but he immediately regained his consciousness. He then took up the quiver that Bhagavān Viṣṇu gave him before and many other weapons; and ascending on another chariot built of jewels, began to fight violently and valiantly. Getting angry, he resisted all those showers of snakes, mountains and trees by his divine weapons. He resisted fire by his watery (*pāryannya*) weapon. Then He easily cut off Śankhachūda's chariot, bow, armor, charioteer, and his bright crown, and he threw on his breast one blazing Śakti of white color. The Dānavendra fell unconscious; but, at the next moment, he regained his consciousness quickly, mounted on another chariot and took a fresh quiver. The Dānava was the foremost in his magic powers. By his power of Māyā, he made a shower of arrows so much so that Kārtikeya became completely covered by that multitude of arrows. Then the Dānava took one invincible Śakti, lustrous like a hundred Suns. It seemed that flames of fire were licking high as if the dissolution time had come aright. Inflamed by anger, the Dānava threw that Śakti on Kārtikeya. It seemed, then, that a burning mass of fire fell on him. The powerful Kārtikeya became senseless. Bhadrakālī immediately took Him on Her lap and carried him before Śiva. Śiva easily restored him to his life by his knowledge-power and gave him the indomitable strength. He then got up in full vigor.

Bhadrakālī went to the field to see Kārtikeya's forces. Nandīśvara and other heroes, the Devas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and Kinnaras followed Her. Hundreds of war drums were sounded and hundreds of persons carried *madhu* (wine). Going to the battleground, She gave a war cry. The Dānava forces fainted by that cry. Bhadrakālī shouted aloud inauspicious peals after peals of laughter. Then She drank *madhu* and danced in the battlefield. Ugra Damstrā, Ugrachandā, Kotavī, the Yogīnīs, Dākinīs and the Devas all drank *madhu* (wine). Seeing Kālī in the battlefield, Śankhachūda came up again and imparted the spirit of fearlessness to the Daityas, trembling with fear. Bhadrakālī projected, then, the fire weapon, flaming like the great fire of dissolution; but the king quickly put out that by the watery weapon. Kālī then projected the very violent and wonderful

Varunāstra. The Dānava cut off that easily with Gandharbāstra. Kālī then threw the flame-like Maheśvarāstra. The king made it futile by the Vaiṣṇavāstra. Then the Devī purifying the Nārāyaṇāstra with the *mantra*, threw it on the king. At this the king instantly alighted from his chariot and bowed down to it. The Nārāyaṇāstra rose high up like the dissolution fire. Śankhachūda fell prostrate on the ground with devotion. The Devī threw, then, the Brahmāstra, purifying it with *mantra*. But it was rendered futile by the Dānava's Brahmāstra. The Devī again shot the divine weapons purifying them with *mantras;* but they also were nullified by the divine weapons of the Dānava. Then Bhadrakālī threw one Śakti extending to one *yojana*. The Daitya cut it to pieces by his divine weapon. The Devī, then, being very much enraged, became ready to throw Pāśupatāstra, when an incorporeal voice was heard from the Heavens, prohibiting Her, and saying, "O Devī! The high-souled Dānava would not be killed by the Pāśupata weapon. For Brahmā granted him this boon that until Viṣṇu's *kavaca* will remain on his neck and until his wife's chastity be not violated, old age and death will not be able to touch him."

Hearing this celestial voice, the Devī at once desisted. But She, out of hunger, devoured hundreds and *lakhs* of Dānavas. The terrible Devī Kālī, then, went with great speed to devour Śankhachūda but the Dānava resisted Her by his sharp divine weapons. The Devī then threw on him a powerful axe, lustrous like a summer Sun; but the Dānava cut it to pieces by his divine weapon. The Devī seeing this, became very angry and proceeded to devour him; but the Dānava King, the Lord of all *siddhas*, expanded his body. At this, Kālī became violently angry and assuming a terrific appearance, went quickly and with the blow of one fist, broke his chariot and dropped down the charioteer. Then She hurled on the Asura one *śūla* weapon, blazing like a *pralaya* fire. Śankhachūda easily held that by his left hand. The Devī became angry and struck the Dānava with Her fist; the Daitya's head reeled, and rolling, he fell unconscious for a moment. Next moment regaining his consciousness he got up. But he did not fight hand-to-hand with the Devī. Rather he bowed down to Her. The weapons that the Devī threw afterwards were partly cut down by the Dānava and

partly taken up and absorbed in him, and thus rendered futile. Then Bhadrakālī caught bold of the Dānava and whirling him round and round, threw him aloft. Then the powerful Śankhachūda fell down on the ground from high with great force; he immediately got up and bowed down to Her. He then gladly ascended on his beautiful chariot, built of excellent jewels. He did not feel any fatigue from the war and went on fighting.

Then the Devī Bhadrakālī, feeling hungry began to drink the blood of the Dānavas and ate the fat and flesh. She came before Mahādeva and described to Him the whole history of the warfare from beginning to end. Hearing the killing of the Dānavas, Mahādeva began to laugh. She went on saying, "The Dānavas that get out of my mouth while I was chewing them, are the only ones that are living. This number will be about one *lakh*. And when I took up the Pāśupata weapon to kill the Dānava, the incorporeal celestial voice spoke: 'He is invulnerable to you.' But the very powerful Dānava did no more fling any weapon on Me. He simply cut to pieces those that I threw on him."

Here ends the Twenty-Second Chapter in the Ninth Skandha on the fight between the Devas and Śankhachūda in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIII—the Killing of Śankhachūda

1-6. Nārāyaṇa said: "Śiva, versed in the knowledge of the higher Reality, hearing all this, went himself with His whole host to the battle. Seeing Him, Śankhachūda alighted from his chariot and fell prostrate before Him. With great force he got up and, quickly putting on his armor he took up his huge and heavy bow case. Then a great fight ensued between Śiva and Śankhachūda for a full one hundred years, but there was no defeat nor victory on either side. The result was stalemate. Both of them, Bhagavān and the Dānava quit their weapons. Śankhachūda remained on his chariot and Mahādeva role on His bull. Hundreds and hundreds of Dānavas were

slain. But extraordinarily endowed with divine power, Śambhu restored to life all those of His party that were slain.

7-30. In the meanwhile, an aged Brāhmaṇa, very distressed in his appearance, came to the battlefield and asked Śankhachūda, the King of Dānavas: "O King! Grant me what I beg of you; you give away in charity all sorts of wealth and riches; give me also what I desire; give me, a Brāhmaṇa, something also. I am a quiet peaceable aged Brāhmaṇa, very very thirsty. Make your promise first and then I will speak to you what I desire."

King Śankhachūda, with a gracious countenance and pleasing eyes swore before him that he would give him what he would desire. Then the Brāhmaṇa spoke to the King with great affection and *māyā:* "I am desirous of your *kavaca* (amulet)." The King, then, gave him the *kavaca* (the amulet with *mantra* written on a Bhurja bark and located in a golden cup). Bhagavān Hari (in the form of that Brāhmaṇa) took that *kavaca* and assuming the form of Śankhachūda, came to Tulasī. Coming there, He made His *māyā* (magic) maṇifest and held sexual intercourse with her. At this time Mahādeva took up the Hari's trident, aiming at the king of the Dānavas. The trident looked like the midday summer sun, flaming like a *pralaya* fire. It looked irresistible and invincible, as if quite powerful to kill any enemies. In brilliance it equalled the Sudarśan Chakra (disc) and it was the chief of all the weapons. No one other than Śiva and Keśava could wield such a weapon. And everybody feared it but Śiva and Keśava. In length it was one thousand *dhanus* and in width it was one hundred hands. It seemed lively, of the nature of Brahman, eternal and not capable to be noticed whence and how it proceeded. The weapon could destroy, by its own free will, all the worlds. When Śiva held it aloft and aiming at Śankhachūda, He hurled it on him, the King of the Demons quit his bows and arrows and with mind collected in a *yoga* posture, began to meditate on the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with great devotion. At that moment the trident, whirling round fell on Śankhachūda and easily burnt him and his chariot to ashes. He, then assuming the form of a two-armed *gopa*, full of

youth, divine, ornamented with jewels, holding flute, mounted on a Divine Chariot, surrounded by *kotis* and *kotis* of *gopas* who came there from the region of Goloka, whose bodies were built of excellent jewels, and Śankhachūda then went up to the heavens (Goloka, where Śrī Vṛṇḍābana is located in the middle). He went to Vṛṇḍābana, full of *rāsas* (transcendental sentiments) and bowed down at the lotus feet of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa with devotion. Both of them were filled with love when they saw Sudāmā, and with gracious countenance and joyful eyes, They took him on Their laps. On the other hand the *śūla* weapon came with force and gladness back again to Kṛṣṇa.

The bones of Śankhachūda, O Narada, were transformed into conchshells. These conchshells are always considered very sacred and auspicious in the worship of the Devas. The water in the conchshell is also very holy and pleasing to the Devas. What more than this, that the water in the conchshell is as holy as the water of any *tīrtha*. This water can be offered to all the Gods but not to Śiva. Wherever the conchshell is blown, there Lakṣmī abides with great pleasure. If bathing be done with conchshell water, it is equivalent to taking bath in all the *tīrthas*. Bhagavān Hari resides direct in the conchshell. Where *śankha* is placed, there Hari resides. Lakṣmī also resides there and all inauspicious things fly away from there. Where the females and Śūdras blow the *śankhas*, Lakṣmī then gets vexed and, out of terror, She goes away to other places.

O Nārada! Mahādeva, after killing the Dānava, went to His own abode. When He gladly went away on His vehicle, the Bull's back, with His whole host, all the other Devas went to their respective places with great gladness. Celestial drums were sounded in the heavens. The Gandharvas and the Kinnaras began to sing songs. And showers of flowers were strewn on Śiva's head. All the Munis and Devas and their chiefs began to chant hymns to Him."

Here ends the Twenty-Third Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the killing of Śankhachūda in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIV—the Glory of Tulasī

1. Nārada said: "How did Nārāyaṇa impregnate Tulasī? Kindly describe all that in detail."

2-11. Nārāyaṇa said: "For accomplishing the ends of the Devas, Bhagavān Hari assumed the Vaiṣṇava *māyā*, took the *kavaca* from Śankhachūda and assuming his form, went to the house of Tulasī. *Dundubhis* (celestial drums) were sounded at Her door, shouts of victory were proclaimed and Tulasī was informed. The chaste Tulasī, hearing that sound very gladly looked out on the royal road from the window. Then for auspicious observances, She offered riches to the Brāhmaṇas; then She gave wealth to the panegyrists (or bards attached to the courts of princes), to the beggars, and the other chanters of hymns. Then Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa alighted from His chariot and went to the house of the Devī Tulasī, built of invaluable gems, looking exceedingly artistic and beautiful. Seeing her dear husband before her, She became very glad, washed his feet, shed tears of joy and bowed down to Him. Then She, impelled by love, made him take his seat on the beautiful jewel throne and giving him sweet-scented betel with camphor, began to say: 'Today my life has been crowned with success. For I am seeing again my lord returned from the battle.' Then she cast smiling glances askance at him and with her body filled with rapturous joy lovingly asked him the news of the war in sweet words:

12-13. 'O Thou, the ocean of mercy! Now tell me of your heroic valor, how you have come out victorious in war with Mahādeva who destroys countless universes?' Hearing Tulasī's word, the Lord of Lakṣmī, in the guise of Śankhachūda, spoke these nectar-like words with a smiling countenance.

14-17. 'O Dear! Full one *samvatsara* the war lasted betwixt us. All the Daityas were killed. Then Brahmā himself came and mediated. Peace, then, was brought about and by the command of Brahmā, I gave over to the Devas their rights. When I returned to my home, Śiva went back to His Śivaloka.' Thus saying, Hari, the Lord of the world, slept and then engaged

in sexual intercourse with her. But the chaste Tulasī, finding this time her experience quite different from what She used to enjoy before, argued all the time within herself and at last questioned him:

18-22. 'Who are you? O magician! By spreading your magic, you have enjoyed me. As you have taken my chastity, I will curse you.' Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, hearing Tulasī's words and being afraid of the curse, assumed His real beautiful figure. The Devī then saw the eternal Lord of the Devas before her. He was of a deep blue color like fresh rain clouds and with eyes like autumnal lotuses and with playful *līlās* equivalent to tens and tens of millions of Cupid personified, adorned with jewels and ornaments. His face was smiling and gracious; and he wore his yellow-colored robe. The love-stricken Tulasī, seeing that lovely form of Vāsudeva, immediately fell senseless; and at the next moment, regaining consciousness, she began to speak.

23-27. 'O Lord! Thou art like a stone. Thou hast no mercy. By hypocrisy Thou hast destroyed my chastity, my virtue and for that reason didst kill my husband. O Lord! Thou had no mercy; Thy heart is like a stone. So let Thee be turned into a stone. Those who declare Thee as a saint are no doubt mistaken. Why didst Thou for the sake of others, kill without any fault another *bhakta* of Thine?' Thus speaking, Tulasī overpowered with grief and sorrow, cried aloud and repeatedly gave vent to lamentations. Seeing her thus very distressed, Nārāyaṇa, the ocean of mercy, spoke to her to cheer her up according to the rules of *dharma*.

28-102. 'O Honored One! For a long time you performed *tapasyā* in this Bhārata, to get Me. Śankhachūda, too, performed *tapasyā* for a long time to get you. By that *tapas*, Śankhachūda got you as wife. Now it is highly incumbent to award you also with the fruit that you asked for. Therefore I have done this. Now quit your this terestrial body and assume a divine body and marry Me. O Rāme! Be like Lakṣmī. This body of yours will be known by the name of Gandakī, a very virtuous, pure and pellucid stream in this holy land of Bhārata. Your hairs will be turned into sacred trees and as they will be born of you, you will be known by the name of Tulasī. All

the three worlds will perform their *pūjās* with the leaves and flowers of this Tulasī. Therefore, O fair-faced one! This Tulasī will be reckoned as the chief amongst all flowers and leaves. In heavens, earth and the nether regions, and before Me, O fair one, you will reign as the chief amongst trees and flowers. In the region of Goloka, on the banks of the river Virajā, in the *rāsa* circle (the celestial ball dance,) where all amorous sentiments are played in Vṛṇḍāvana forest, in Bhāndīra forest, in Campaka forest, in the beautiful Chhandana sandalwood forest, and in the groves of Mādhavī, Ketakī, Kuṇḍa, Mallikā, and Mālatī, in the sacred places you will live and bestow the highest religious merits. All the *tīrthas* will reside at the bottom of the Tulasī tree and so religious merits will accrue to all. O fair-faced one! There I and all the Devas will wait in expectation of the falling of a Tulasī leaf. Anybody who will be initiated and installed with the Tulasī leaves' water, will get all the fruits of being initiated in all the sacrifices. Whatever pleasure Hari gets when thousands and thousands of jars filled with water are offered to him, the same pleasure He will get when one Tulasī leaf will be offered to Him. Whatever fruits are acquired by giving *ayuta* cows as presents, those will be also acquired by giving Tulasī leaves. Especially if one gives Tulasī leaves in the month of Kārtik, one gets the fruits same as above mentioned. If one drinks or gets the Tulasī leaf water at the momentous time of death, one becomes freed of all sins and is worshipped in the Viṣṇu-loka. He who drinks daily the Tulasī leaf water certainly gets the fruit of one *lakh* horse sacrifices. He who plucks or culls the Tulasī leaf by his own hand holding it on his body, quits his life in a *tīrtha* and goes to Viṣṇu-loka. Whoever holds in his neck the garland made up of Tulasī wood, gets certainly the fruit of horse sacrifices at every step.

He who does not keep his word, holding the Tulasī leaf in his hand, goes to the Kālasūtra Hell as long as the Sun and Moon last. He who gives false evidence in the presence of the Tulasī leaf, goes to the Kumbhīpāka Hell for the lifetimes of fourteen Indras. He who drinks or gets a bit of the Tulasī leaf water at the time of death, certainly goes to Vaikuṇṭha, ascending on a car made of jewels. Those who pluck or cull the Tulasī leaves in the Full Moon night, on the twelfth lunar day, on the passing of the sun from one

sign to another, the midday, or on the twilights, on the night, while applying oil on their bodies, on the impurity periods, and while putting on night dresses, verily eat off the Nārāyaṇa's head.

O chaste one! The Tulasī leaf kept in the night, is considered sacred. It is considered good in *śrāddha*, vow ceremony, in the making over of any gift, in the installation of any image or in worshipping any Deva. Again, the Tulasī leaf fallen on the ground or fallen in water or offered to Viṣṇu, if washed out can be used in holy and other purposes. Thus, O good one! You will remain as a tree on this earth and will remain in Goloka as the presiding deity thereof, and will enjoy daily sport with Kṛṣṇa. And also you will be the presiding deity of the river Gandakī, and thus bestow religious merits in Bhārata; you will be the wife of the salt ocean, which is My part. You are very chaste; in Vaikuṇṭha you will enjoy Me as Rāma lives with Me.

And as for Me, I will be turned into stone by your curse; I will remain in India close to the bank of the river Gandakī. Millions and millions of insects with their sharp teeth will make rings, (the convolutions in the *śālagrāma* or sacred stones), on the cavities of the mountains there, representing Me. Of these stones, those that have one door (entrance hole), four convolutions, adorned by the garland of wild flowers (having a mark like this) and which look like fresh rain cloud, are called Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa *mūrtis* (forms). And those that have one door, four convolutions and look like fresh rain clouds but no garlands are called Lakṣmī Jānardana Chakras (discus). Those that have two doors, four convolutions, and decked with a mark like cow's hoof and void of the garland mark are called Raghunātha *cakras*. Those that are very small in size, with two *cakras* and look like fresh rain clouds and void of the garland marks are named Vāmana *cakras*. Those that that are very small in size, with two *cakras* and the garland mark added, know then to be the Śrīdhara *cakras*. These always bring in prosperity to the household. Those that are big, circular, void of garland mark, with two circular *cakras*, are known as Dāmodara forms. Those that are mediocre in size, with two *cakras* and marked as if struck by an arrow,

having marks of arrows and bow-cases are known as Rana-Rāmas. Those that are middling, with seven *cakras*, having marks of an umbrella and ornaments, are called Rājarājeśvaras. They bestow the royal Lakṣmī to persons. Those that have twice seven *cakras* and are big, looking like fresh rain clouds are named Anantas. They bestow the four-fold fruits (*dharma*, wealth, desire and liberation). Those that are in their forms like a ring, with two *cakras*, beautiful, looking like rain clouds, having cow-hoof marks and of mediocre size are named Madhusūdanas. Those that have one *cakras* are called Sudarśanas. Those that have their *cakras* hidden are called Gadādharas. Those that have two *cakras*, looking horse-faced, are known as Hayagrīvas.

O chaste one! Those that have their mouths very wide and extended, with two *cakras*, and very terrible, are known as Narasiṁhas. They excite Vairāgyas to all who serve them. Those that have two *cakras*, mouths extended and with garland marks (elliptical marks) are called Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁhas. They always bless the householders who worship them. Those that have two *cakras* near their doors (faces), that look even and beautiful, and with marks maṇifested are known as Vāsudevas. They yield all sorts of fruits. Those that have their *cakras* fine and their forms like fresh rain clouds and have many fine hole marks within their wide gaping facets are called Pradyumnas. They yield happiness to every householder. Those that have their faces of two *cakras* stuck together and their backs capacious, are known as Saṅkarṣaṇas. They always bring in happiness to the householders. Those that look yellow, round and very beautiful are Anirudhas. The sages say they give happiness to the householder.

Where there is the *śālagrāma* stone there exists Śrī Hari Himself; and where there is Hari, Lakṣmī and all the *tīrthas* dwell there. Worshipping *śālagrām-śilā* destroys the *brahma-hātyā* (killing a Brāhmaṇa) and any other sin whatsoever. In worshipping the *śālagrāma* stone looking like an umbrella, kingdoms are obtained; in worshipping circular *śilās*, great prosperity is obtained; in worshipping cart-shaped stones, miseries arise; and in worshipping stones whose ends look like spears (*śūlas*), death inevitably

follows. Those whose facets are distorted, bring in poverty; and yellow stones bring in various evils and afflictions. Those whose *cakras* look broken bring in diseases; and those whose *cakras* are rent asunder bring in death certainly.

Observing vows, making gifts, installing images, doing *śrāddhas,* worshipping the Devas, all these become highly exalted if done before the *śālagrāma-śilā*. One acquires the merits of bathing in all the *tīrthas* and in being initiated in all the sacrifices if one worships the *śālagrāma-śilā*. More than this, that the merits acquired by all the sacrifices, all the *tīrthas*, all vows, all austerities and reading all the *Vedas* are all acquired by duly worshipping by the holy *śālagrāma-śilā*. He who performs his *abhiśeka* ceremony always with *śālagrāma* water (being sprinkled with *śālagrāma* water at the initiation and installation ceremonies), acquires the religious merits of performing all sorts of gifts and circumambulating the whole earth. All the Devas are, no doubt, pleased with him who thus worships daily the *śālagrāma*. More than this, all the *tīrthas* want to have his touch. He becomes a *jīvanmukta* (liberated while living) and becomes very holy; ultimately he goes to the region of Śrī Hari and remains in Hari's service there and dwells with him for countless *prakṛtic* dissolutions. Every sin, like *brahmā-hatyā*, flies away from him as serpents do at the sight of Garuḍa. The Devī Vasundharā (the Earth) becomes purified by the touch of the dust of his feat. At his birth, all his predecessors (a *lakh* in number), are saved. He who gets the *śālagrāma-śilā* water during the time of his death is freed of all his sins, goes to Viṣṇu-loka and gets *nirvāṇa;* he becomes freed entirely from the effects of *karma* and he gets, no doubt, dissolved and dissolved forever in (the feet of) Viṣṇu.

He who tells lies, holding *śālagrāma* in his hands, goes to the Kumbhīpāka Hell for the life-period of Brahmā. If one does not keep his word, uttered with the *śālagrāma* stone in his hand, one goes to the Asipatra Hell for one *lakh manvantaras*. He who worships the *śālagrāma* stone without offering Tulasī leaves on it, or separates the Tulasī leaves from the stone, will have to suffer separation from his wife in his next birth. If one does not offer the

Tulasī leaves in the conchshell, for seven births he remains without his wife and he becomes diseased. He who preserves the *śālagrāma* stone, the Tulasī and the conchshell in one place, becomes very learned and becomes dear to Nārāyaṇa. Look! He who casts his semen once in his wife suffers intense pain, no doubt, at each other's separation. So you became dear to Śankhachūda for one *manvantara*. Now, what wonder that you suffer pain, at his bereavement.'

O Nārada! Thus saying, Śrī Hari desisted. Tulasī quit her mortal coil and assumed a divine form, began to remain in the breast of Śrī Hari like Śrī Lakṣmī Devī. Hari also went with her to Vaikuṇṭha. Thus Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Gaṅgā and Tulasī, all the four came so very dear to Hari and are recognized as *īśvarīs*. On the other hand, the mortal coil of Tulasī, no sooner quit by Tulasī, became transformed into the river Gandakī. Bhagavān Hari, too, became also converted into a holy mountain on the banks thereof, yielding religious merits to the people. The insects cut and fashioned many pieces out of that mountain. Of them, those that fall into the river yield fruits undoubtedly. And those pieces that fall on the ground become yellow colored; they are not at all fit for worship. O Nārada! Thus I have spoken to you everything. What more do you want to hear now? Say."

Here ends the Twenty-fourth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the glory of Tulasī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXV—Worship of Tulasī Devī

1-2. Nārada said: "When the Devī Tulasī has been made so dear to Nārāyaṇa and thus an object for worship, then describe Her worship and *stotra* (the hymn of Tulasī) now. O Muni! By whom was She first worshipped? By whom were Her glories first sung? And how did She become therefore an object of worship? Speak out all these to me."

3. Sūta said: "Hearing these words of Nārada, Nārāyaṇa, laughing, began to describe this very holy and sin-destroying account of Tulasī."

4-15. Nārāyaṇa said: "Bhagavān Hari duly worshipped Tulasī, and began to enjoy her with Lakṣmī; He raised Tulasī to the rank of Lakṣmī and thus made her fortunate and glorious. Lakṣmī and Gaṅgā allowed and bore this new union of Nārāyaṇa and Tulasī. But Sarasvatī could not endure this high position of Tulasī owing to Her anger. She became self-conceited and beat Tulasī on some quarrel before Hari. Tulasī became abashed and insulted, and vanished. Oh! what a wonder! Being the *īśvarī* of all the *siddhis*, the Devī, self-maṇifest and the giver of *siddhiyoga* to the *jñānins*, Tulasī, became angry and became invisible even to Śrī Hari.

Not seeing Tulasī, Hari appeased Sarasvatī and getting Her permission, went to the Tulasī forest. Going there and taking a bath in due accord, and with due rites, worshipped with His whole heart the chaste Tulasī and then began to meditate on Her with devotion. O Nārada! One gets certainly all *siddhis* who worships Tulasī duly with the ten-lettered mantra: ***śrīṁ hṛīṁ klīṁ aiṁ vṛṇḍāvaṇyai svāhā***, the king of *mantras*, yielding fruits and all gratifications like the *kalpa* tree. O Nārada! At the time of worship, the lamp of ghee was lighted and *dhūpa, sindūra,* sandalwood paste, food, flowers, etc., were offered to Her. Thus hymned by Hari, Tulasī came out of the tree, pleased. And She gladly took refuge at His lotus feet. Viṣṇu, then, granted her boon that, 'You will be worshipped by all; I will keep you in My breast and on My head, and the Devas also will hold you on their heads.' And He then took her to His own abode."

16. Nārada said: "O Highly Fortunate One! What is Tulasī's *dhyāna, stotra* and method of worship? Kindly describe all these."

17. Nārāyaṇa said: "When Tulasī vanished, Hari became very much agitated at her bereavement, went to Vṛṇḍāvana and began to praise her.

18-44. Bhagavān said: 'The Tulasī trees collect in multitudinous groups; hence the Paṇḍitas call it *vrindā*. I praise that dear Tulasī. Of old, She appeared in the Vṛṇḍāvana forest and therefore known as Vṛṇḍāvanī. I worship that fortunate and glorious one. She is worshipped always in innumerable universes and is, therefore, known as Viśvapūjitā

(worshipped by all). I worship that Viśvapūjitā, by whose contact these countless universes are always rendered pure and holy; and therefore She is called Viśvapāvani (purifying the whole universe). I am suffering from her bereavement, I remember the Devī. Without Tulasī, the Devas do not get pleased, though other flowers be heaped on them; therefore She is considered as the essence of all the flowers. Now I am in sorrow and trouble and I am very eager to see Her, who is of the nature of purity incarnate. The whole universe gets delighted when the *bhaktas* receive her; hence She is called Nandinī; so may She be pleased with Me. There is nothing in the universe that can be compared to Her; hence She is called Tulasī; I take refuge of that clear Tulasī. That chaste dear one is the life of Kṛṣṇa, hence She is known as Kṛṣṇajīvanī. Now may She save My life.'

O Nārada! Thus praising, Ramāpatī remained there. The chaste Tulasī then came to His sight and bowed down to His lotus feet. When She becoming sensitive from the insult, began to weep, Bhagavān Viṣṇu, seeing that sensitive dear one, immediately took Her to His breast. Taking, then, Sarasvatī's permission, He took her to His own home and brought about, first of all, the agreement between her and Sarasvatī. Then He granted her the boon, 'You will be worshipped by all, respected by all, and honored by all; and all will carry you on their heads.' I will also worship, respect and honor You and keep You on My head.' Receiving this boon from Viṣṇu, the Devī Tulasī became very glad. Sarasvatī then attracted her to her side, made her sit close to her. Lakṣmī and Gaṅgā both with smiling faces attracted her and made her enter into the house.

O Nārada! Whosoever worships her with her eight names Vrindā, Vṛṇdāvanī, Viśvapūjitā, Viśvapāvanī, Tulasī, Puspasārā, Nandanī and Kṛṣṇajīvanī and their meanings and sings this hymn of eight verses duly, acquires the merit of performing Aśvamedha Yajña (horse sacrifice). Specially, on the Full Moon night of the month of Kārtik, the auspicious birth ceremony of Tulasī is performed. Of old, Viṣṇu worshipped her at that time. Whoever worships with devotion on that full Moon the universe-purifying Tulasī, becomes freed of all sins and goes to Viṣṇu-loka. Offerings

of Tulasī leaves to Viṣṇu in the month of Kārtik bring merits equal to those in giving away *ayuta* cows. Hearing this *stotra* at that period gives sons to the sonless persons, wives to the wifeless persons and friends to friendless persons. On hearing this *stotra*, the diseased become free of their diseases, the persons in bondage become free, the terrified become fearless, and the sinners are freed of their sins.

O Nārada! Thus it has been mentioned how to chant *stotra* to her. Now hear her *dhyāna* and method of worship. In the *Vedas*, in the Kānva-śākhā branch, the method of worship is given. You know that one is to meditate on the Tulasī plant, without any invocation (*āvāhana*) and then worship her with devotion, presenting all sorts of offerings as required to her. Now hear Her *dhyānam*.

> Of all the flowers, Tulasī (the holy basil) is the best, very holy, and captivating the mind. It is a flame burning away all the fuel of sins committed by man. In the *Vedas* it is stated that this plant is called Tulasī, because there can be made no comparison with Her amongst all the flowers. She is the holiest of them all. She is placed on the heads of all and desired by all and gives holiness to the universe. She gives *jīvanmukti, mukti* and devotion to Śrī Hari. I worship Her.

Thus meditating on Her and worshipping Her according to due rites, one is to bow down to Her. O Nārada! I have described to you the full history of Śrī Tulasī Devī. What more do yo want to hear now, say."

Here ends the Twenty-fifth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the method of worship of Tulasī Devī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXVI—the Narration of Sāvitrī

1-2. Nārada said: "I have heard the anecdote of Tulasī. Now describe in detail the history of Sāvitrī. Sāvitrī is considered as the Mother of the *Vedas*.

Why was She born, in days gone by? By whom was She first worshipped and subsequently also?"

3-4. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Muni! She was first worshipped by Brahmā. Next the *Vedas* worshipped her. Subsequently the learned men worshipped her. Next King Aśvapati worshipped Her in India. Next the four *varṇas* (castes) worshipped Her."

5. Nārada said: "O Brāhmaṇa! Who is that Aśvapati? Why did he worship? When the Devī Sāvitrī became adorable by all, by which persons was She first worshipped and by which persons subsequently?"

6-14. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Muni! The King Aśvapati reigned in Bhadradeśa, rendering his enemies powerless and making his friends painless. He had a very religious queen; her name was Mālatī; She was like a second Lakṣmī. She was barren; desirous of an issue, She under the instruction of Vasiṣṭha, duly worshipped Sāvitrī with devotion. But She did not receive any vision nor any command; therefore She returned home with a grievous heart. Seeing her sorry, the king consoled her with good words and himself accompanied her to Puṣkara with a view to perform *tapas* to Sāvitrī with devotion. Being self-controlled, they practiced *tapasyā* for one hundred years. Still he could not see Sāvitrī, but a voice came to him. An incorporeal, celestial voice reached his ears: 'Perform *japam* (repeat) ten *lakhs* of Gāyatrī *mantram*.' At this moment Parāśara came up there. The king bowed down to him.

The Muni said: 'O King! One *japa* of Gāyatrī, destroys the days' sins. Ten *japams* of Gāyatrī destroy day and night's sins.

15-40. One hundred Gāyatrī *japams* destroy one month's sins. One thousand *japams* destroy one year's sins. One *lakh* Gāyatrī *japams* destroy the sins of the present birth, and ten *lakh* Gāyatrī *japams* destroy the sins of other births. One hundred *lakhs* of *japams* destroy the sins of all the births. If ten times that (1,000 *lakhs*) be done, then liberation is obtained.

Now the method how to make Gāyatrī *japam*. Make the palm of the right hand like a snake's hood; see that the fingers are all close, no holes are seen; and make the ends of the fingers bend downwards; then being calm and quiet and with one's face eastward, practice *japam*. Then count from the middle of the ring (nameless) finger and go on counting clockwise until you come to the bottom of the index finger. This is the rule of counting by the hand.

O King! The mālā is to be of the seed of white lotus or crystal; it should be consecrated and purified. *Japam* is to be done then in a sacred *tīrtha* or in a temple. Becoming self-controlled, one should place the mālā on a banyan leaf or on a lotus leaf and smear it with cow dung; wash it, uttering Gāyatrī *mantra* and over it perform one hundred times Gāyatrī *japam* intently in accordance with the rules. Or wash it with *pañca-gavya*—milk, curd, clarified butter, cow urine and cow dung—and then consecrate it well. Then wash it with Ganges water and perform the consecrations.

O Rājarsi! Then perform ten *lakhs* of *japam* in due order. Thus the sins of your three births will be destroyed and then you will see the Devī Sāvitrī. O King! Do this *japam*, being pure, every day in the morning, midday and in the evening. If one be impure and devoid of *sandhyā*, one has no right to do any action; and even if one performs an action, one does not get any fruit thereby. He who does not do the morning and evening *sandhyā* is driven away from all the Brāhmiṇical *karmas* and he becomes like a *śūdra*. He who does *sandhyā* three times daily throughout his life, becomes like the Sun by his luster and brilliance of *tapas*. What more than this, the earth is always purified by the dust of his feet. The Dvīja who does his *sandhyā vandanā* and remains pure, becomes energetic and liberated while living. By his contact all the *tīrthas* become purified. All sins vanish away from him as snakes fly away at the sight of Garuḍa. The *dvīja* who becomes devoid of *sandhyā* three times a day, the Devas do not accept his worship nor the *pitṛs* accept his Piṇḍas.

He who has no *bhakti* towards the Mūla-Prakṛti, who does not worship the specific *bīja-mantra* of Māyā (*hṛīṁ*) and who does not hold festivities in

honor of Mūla-Prakṛti, know him verily to be an Ajagara snake without poison. Devoid of the Viṣṇu *mantra*, devoid of the three *sandhyās* and devoid of the fasting on the *ekādaśi-tithi* (the eleventh clay of the fortnight), the Brāhmaṇa becomes a snake devoid of poison. The vile Brāhmaṇa who does not like to take the offerings dedicated to Hari, who does the washerman's work and eats the food of *Śūdra* and drives the buffaloes, becomes a snake devoid of poison. The Brāhmaṇa who burns the dead bodies of the *śūdras*, becomes like the man who is the husband of an unmarried girl. The Brāhmaṇa also who becomes a cook of a *Śūdra*, becomes a snake void of poison. The Brāhmaṇa who accepts the gifts of a *Śūdra*, who performs the sacrifice of a *Śūdra*, who lives as clerks and warriors becomes like a snake void of poison. The Brāhmaṇa who sells his daughter, who sells the name of Hari or eats the food of a woman who is without husband son, as well as of one who has just bathed after her menstruation period, becomes like a serpent void of poison. The Brāhmaṇa who takes the profession of pimps and pampers and lives on the interest, is also like a serpent void of poison. The Brāhmaṇa who sleeps even when the Sun has risen, eats fish and does not worship the Devī is also like a poisonless serpent.'

Thus stating all the rules of worship in order, the best of the Munis told him the *dhyānam*, etc., of the Devī Sāvitrī, that he wanted. Then he informed the King of all the *mantras* and went to his own *āśrama*. The king then worshipped accordingly, saw the Devī Sāvitrī and got boons."

41-43. Nārada said: "What is the Sāvitrī's *dhyānam*, what are the modes of Her worship, what is the *stotra-mantra* that Parāśara gave to the King before he went away? How did the King worship and what boon did he get? This great mystery, well-renowned in the *śrutis* about Sāvitrī. I am desirous to hear in brief all the points."

44-78. Nārāyaṇa said: "On the thirteenth day (the *trayodaśi-tithi*) of the black fortnight in the month Jyaiṣṭha or on the fourteenth day (the *caturdaśi-tithi*) of any other holy period, this vow is to be observed with great care and devotion. Fourteen fruits and fourteen plates with offerings

of food on them, flowers and incense are to be offered and this vow is to be observed for fourteen years consecutively. Garments, holy threads and other articles are also offered; and after the *vrata* is over, the Brāhmaṇas are to be fed. The lucky pot (*maṅgal-ghat*) is to be located duly according to the rules of worship with branches and fruits. Gaṇeśa, Agṇi, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Śivā are to be worshipped duly.

In that *ghat* Sāvitrī is to be next invoked and worshipped. Now hear the *dhyānam* of Sāvitrī, as stated in the *Mādhyan Dina Sakhā*, as well the *stotra*, the modes of worship and the *mantra*, the giver of all desires.

> 'I meditate and adore that Sāvitrī, the Mother of the *Vedas*, of the nature of *praṇava* (*āūm̐*), whose color is like the burnished gold, who is burning with *brahma-teja* (the fire of Brahman), effulgent with thousands of rays of the midday summer Sun, who is of a smiling countenance adorned with jewels and ornaments, wearing celestial garments (purified and uninflammable by fire), and ready to grant blessings to Her *bhaktas;* who is the bestower of happiness and liberation, who is peaceful and the Consort of the Creator of the world, who is all wealth and the giver of all riches and prosperity, who is the presiding Deity of the *Vedas* and who is the *Vedas* incarnate, I meditate on Thee.'

Thus reciting the *dhyānam, mantra* and meditating on Her, one is to offer *naivedya* (offerings of food) to Her and then place one's fingers on one's head; one is to meditate again, and then invoke the Devī within the pot. One should next present fourteen things, uttering proper *mantras* according to the *Vedas*. Then one must perform special *pūjā*, chant hymns to the Devī and worship Her. The fourteen articles of worship are:

(1) Seat (*āsana*); (2) water for washing feet (*pādya*), (3) offering of rice and *darba* grass (*arghya*), (4) water for bath (*snānīya*), (6) anointment with sandalwood paste and other scents (*anulepana*), (7) incense (*dhūpa*), (8) lamps (*dīpa*), (9) offerings of food (*naivedya*), (10) betel (*tambūla*), (11) cool

water (*panīya*), (12) garments, (13) ornaments, (14) garlands, scents, offering of water to sip, and beautiful bedding.

While offering these articles, one is to utter the *mantra*, 'This beautiful wooden or golden seat, giving spiritual merits is being offered by me to Thee. This water from the *tīrthas*, this holy water for washing Thy feet, pleasant, highly meritorious, pure, and as an embodiment of *pūjā* is being offered by me to Thee. This holy *arghya* with *darba* grass and flowers, and the pure water in the conchshell is being offered by me to Thee. This sweet-scented oil and water is being offered by me to Thee with devotion for Thy bathing purposes. Kindly accept these. O Mother! This sweet-scented water divine-like, highly pure and prepared of *kunkuma* and other scented things I offer to Thee. O Parameśvarī! This all-auspicious, all good and highly meritorious, beautiful *dhūpa*, kindly take, O World Mother! This is very pleasant and sweet-scented; therefore I offer this to Thee. O Mother! This lamp, maṇifesting all this Universe and the seed, as it were, to destroy the darkness is being offered by me to Thee. O Devī! Kindly accept this delicious offering of food, highly meritorious, appeasing one's hunger, pleasant, nourishing and pleasure-giving. This betel is scented with camphor, etc., nice, nourishing, and pleasure-giving; this is being offered by me to Thee. This water is nice and cool, appeasing the thirst and the life of the world. So kindly accept this. O Devī! Kindly accept this silken garment as well as the garment made of *kārpāsa* cotton, beautifying the body and enhancing the beauty. Kindly accept these golden ornaments decked with jewels, highly meritorious, joyous, beauteous and prosperous. Kindly accept these fruits yielding fruits of desires, obtained from various trees and of various kinds. Please have this garland, all-auspicious and all-good, made of various flowers, beauteous and generating happiness. O Devī! Kindly accept this sweet scent, highly pleasing and meritorious. Please take this *sindūra*, the best of the ornaments, beautifying the forehead, highly excellent and beautiful. Kindly accept this holy and meritorious *upavitam* purified by Vedic *mantrams*, made of highly holy threads and knitted with highly pure knots.'

Uttering thus, offer the above articles that are to be offered to the Devī, every time the specific *bīja-mantra* is uttered. Then the intelligent devotee should recite the *stotras* and subsequently offer *dakśiṇās* (presents) with devotion to the Brāhmaṇas. The radical or the specific seed *mantra* is the eight-lettered *mantra*—***śrīṁ hṛīṁ klīṁ svāitrai svāhā***—so the sages know. The *stotra* as stated in the *Mādhyandīna śākhā*, gives fruits of all desires.

I am now speaking to you of that Gāyatrī *mantra*, the life of the Brāhmaṇas. Listen attentively. O Nārada! Sāvitrī was given to Brahmā in the ancient times of old in the region of Goloka by Kṛṣṇa; but Sāvitrī did not come to Brahmā-loka with Brahmā. Then by the command of Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā praised the mother of the *Vedas*. And when She got pleased, She accepted Brahmā as Her husband.

79-87. Brahmā prayed: 'Thou art the everlasting existence, intelligence and bliss; Thou art Mūla-Prakṛti; thou art Hiraṇyagarbha; Thou didst get pleased, O fair one! Thou art of the nature of fire and energy; Thou art the highest; Thou art the highest bliss, and the caste of the twice-born. Dost thou get appeased, O fair one! Thou art eternal, dear to the eternal; thou art of the nature of everlasting bliss. O Devī, O Thou, the all-auspicious One! O fair one! Be thou satisfied. Thou art the form of all, omnipresent! Thou art the essence of all *mantras* of the Brāhmaṇas, higher than the highest! Thou art the bestower of happiness and the liberator. O Devī, O fair one! Be thou appeased. Thou art like the burning flame to the fuel of sins of the Brāhmaṇas! O Thou, the bestower of *brahma-teja*, the light of Brahman. O Devī! O fair one! Be appeased. By Thy mere remembrance, all the sins to me by body, mind and speech are burnt to ashes.'

Thus saying, the creator of the world reached the assembly there. Then Sāvitrī came to Brahmaloka with Brahmā. The King Aśvapati chanted this *stotra* to Sāvitrī, saw Her and got from Her the desired boons. Whosoever recites this highly sacred king of *stotras* after *sandhyā-vandanam*, quickly acquires the fruits of studying the *Vedas*.

Here ends the Twenty-Sixth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the narration of Sāvitrī in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXVII—the Birth of Sāvitrī

1-2. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! After having chanted the above hymn to the Goddess Sāvitrī and worshipped Her in accordance with due rites and ceremonies, the king Aśvapati saw the Devī, effulgent like the luster of thousand suns. She then smilingly told the king, as a mother to her son, whilst all the quarters were illumined with the luster of Her body:

3-14. Sāvitrī said: 'O King! I know your desire. Certainly I will give what you and your wife long for. Your chaste wife is anxious for a daughter, while you want a son. So, one after another, the desires of both of you will be fulfilled.' Thus saying, the Devī went to Brahmaloka.

The King also returned to his house. First a daughter was born to him. As the daughter was born, as if a second Lakṣmī was born after worshipping Sāvitrī, the King kept her name as Sāvitrī. As time rolled on, the daughter grew day-by-day, like the phases of bright fortnight moon, into youth and beauty. There was a son of Dyumat Sena, named Satyavāna, always truthful, good-natured and endowed with various other qualifications. The daughter chose him for her bridegroom. The King betrothed her with jewels and ornaments, to Satyavāna, who gladly took her home. After one year expired, the truthful vigorous Satyavāna gladly went out, by his father's command, to collect fruits and fuel. The chaste Sāvitrī, too, followed him. Unfortunately Satyavāna fell down from a tree and died. Yama, the god of death, saw his soul as a *puruṣa* of the size of one's thumb and took it and went away. The chaste Sāvitrī began to follow Him. The high-souled Yama, the foremost of the *sādhus*, seeing Sāvitrī following him, addressed her sweetly: 'O Sāvitrī! Whither are you going in your mortal coil? If you like to follow after all, then quit your body.

15-25. The mortal man, with his transient coil of these five elements, is not able to go to my abode. O chaste one! The death time of your husband

arrived; therefore Satyavāna is going to my abode to reap the fruits of his *karma*. Every living animal is born by his *karma*. He dies again through his lifelong *karma*. It is his *karma* alone that ordains pleasure, pain, fear, sorrows, etc. By *karma*, this embodied soul here becomes Indra; by *karma* he can become a Brahmā's son. What more than this that a *jīva*, by his *karma*, can be in Hari's service and be free from birth and death! By one's own *karma* all sorts of *siddhis* and even immortality can be obtained; the four blessed regions as Viṣṇu's Sālokya, etc., also can be obtained by *karma*. What more than this that by *karma*, a being becomes divine, human, or a King, or Śiva or Gaṇeśa! The state of Munīndra, asceticism, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *mlechha*, moving things, stones, Rākṣasa, Kinnara, kingship, becoming trees, beasts, forest animals, inferior animals, worms, Daityas, Dānavas, Asuras—all are fashioned and wrought by *karma* and *karma* alone.'

O Nārada! Thus speaking, Yama remained silent."

Here ends the Twenty-seventh Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the birth, etc., of Sāvitrī in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXVIII—the Story of Sāvitrī

1-4. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! Hearing the words of Yama, the chaste intelligent Sāvitrī, replied with great devotion: 'O Dharmarājan! What is *karma?* Why and how is its origin? What is the cause of *karma?* Who is the embodied soul bound by *karma?* What is this body? And who is it that does *karma?* What is *jñāṇa?* What is *buddhi?* What is the *prāṇa* of this embodied *jīva?* What are the *indriyas* (senses)? And what are their characteristics? And what are the Devatās thereof? Who is it that enjoys and who is it that makes one enjoy? What is this enjoyment (*bhoga*)? And what is the means of escape from it? And what is the nature of that state when one escapes from enjoyment? What is the nature of *jīvātmā?* And what of Paramātmā? O Deva! Speak all these in detail to me.'

5-21. Dharma said: '*Karma* is of two kinds: good and bad. The *karma* that is stated in the *Vedas* as leading to *dharma* is good; all other actions are bad.

God's service, without any selfish ends (*saṅkalpa*) and without the hope of any fruits thereof (*ahaitukī*), is of such a nature as to root out all *karma* and gives rise to the highest devotion to God. A man who is such a *bhakta* of Brahman becomes liberated, so the *śrutis* say. Who then does the *karma* and who is it that enjoys? for after liberation there is no more body. To such a *bhakta* of Brahman, there is no birth, death, old age, disease, sorrow nor any fear.

O chaste one! *Bhakti* is twofold. This is stated all in the *śrutis*. One type of *bhakti* leads to *nirvāṇa* and the other leads to the nature of Hari. The Vaiṣṇavas want the *bhakti* to Hari—*saguṇa-bhakti*. The other *yogīs* and the best knowers of Brahman want *nirguṇa-bhakti*. He who is the seed of *karma*, and the bestower forever the fruits of *karma*, who is *karma* incarnate and the Mūla-Prakṛti, is Bhagavān; He is the highest Self. He is the material cause of *karma*. Know this body to be by nature liable to dissolve and die. Earth, air, water, fire and *ākāśa*—these are the threads, as it were, of the work of creation of Brahman, Who is of the nature of pure Being. *Dehī* or the embodied soul is the doer of *karma*, the *kartā;* he is the enjoyer, and *ātmā* (self) is the prompter, the stimulator within to do the *karma* and enjoy the fruits thereof. The experiencing of pleasures and pains and the varieties thereof is known as *bhoga* (enjoyment). Liberation, *mukti* is the escape therefrom.

The knowledge by which *ātmā* (*sat*) and *māyā* (*asat*) are discriminated is called *brahma-jñāṇam*. This knowledge is considered as the root discriminator of various objects of enjoyments, by which the various objects are at once recognized as different from *ātmān*. By *buddhi* is meant the right seeing of things, and is considered as the seed of *jñāṇam*. By *prāṇa* is known as the different *vāyus* (airs) in the body. And this *prāṇa* is the strength of the embodied.

Mind is the chief and the best of the senses, it is a part of Īśvara; its characteristic is its doubtful uncertain state. It irresistibly impels all actions. It is inascertainable, invisible; it obstructs *jñāṇa*. The senses are seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting. These are the several limbs, as it

were, of the embodied and the impellers to all actions. They are both enemies and friends, as they give both pain when attached to worldly objects, and happiness when attached to virtuous objects. The Sun, Vāyu, Earth, Brahmā and others are their Devatās. The *jīva* is the holder and the sustainer of *prāṇa*, body, etc. The Paramātmā, the highest Self, is the best of all, omnipresent, transcending the three *guṇas*, and beyond Prakṛti. He is the cause of all causes and He is the Brahman Itself. O chaste one! I have replied according to the *śāstras* to all your questions. These are *jñāṇas* of the *jñānins*. O child! Now go back to your house at pleasure.'

22-30. Sāvitrī said: 'Whither shall I go, leaving my husband to Thee, the ocean of knowledge? Please answer the queries that I now put to Thee. What wombs do the *jīvas* get in response to which *karmas?* What *karmas* lead to the heavens? And what *karmas* lead to various hells? Which *karmas* lead to *mukti?* And which *karmas* give *bhakti?* What *karmas* make one a *yogī* and what *karmas* inflict diseases? Which *karmas* make one's life long or short? Which *karmas* again make one happy? And what *karmas* make one miserable? Which *karmas* make one deformed in one's limbs, one-eyed, blind, deaf, lame or idiotic? Which *karmas* again make one mad, or very much avaricious or of a stealing habit? What *karmas* make one possess *siddhis?* Or make one earn the four *lokas:* Sālokya, etc.? What *karmas* make one a Brāhmaṇa or an ascetic, or make one go to heaven or Vaikuṇṭha? What *karmas* enable one to go to Goloka, the par excellence and free from all diseases? How many are the hells? What are their names and how do they appear? How long will one have to remain in each hell? and what *karmas* lead to what diseases? O Deva, now tell me about these that I have asked to you and oblige.'

Here ends the Twenty-Eighth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the story of Sāvitrī in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIX—the Effects of *Karmas*

1. Nārāyaṇa said: "Yama got thunderstruck at these queries of Sāvitrī. He then began to describe, with a smiling countenance, the fruition of the several works of the *jīvas*."

2-8. He said: 'O child! You are now a daughter only twelve years old. But you speak of wisdom like the highest *jñānins* and *yogīs*, like Sanaka and others. O child! By virtue of the boon granted by Sāvitrī, you have become incarnate of Her in part. The King Aśvapati got you before by performing severe penances. As Lakṣmī is dear and fortunate with regard to Viṣṇu, as Mahādevī is to Mahādeva, Aditi to Kaśyapa, Ahalyā to Gautama, so you are to Satyavāna in respect of affection, good luck and other best qualities. As Śachī is to Mahendra, as Rohinī is to Moon, as Rati is to Kāma, as Svāhā is to Fire, as Svadhā is to the Pitṛs, as Sanjñā is to the Sun, as Varuṇānī is to Varuṇa, as Dakśiṇā is to Yajñā, as Earth is to Varāha, as Devasenā is to Kārtika, so you are fortunate and blessed with respect to Satyavāna. O Sāvitrī! I myself grant you this boon of my own accord. Now ask other boons. O highly fortunate One! I will fulfil all your desires.'

9-12. Sāvitrī said: 'O noble one! Let there be one hundred sons of mine by Satyavāna. This is the boon that I want. Let there be one hundred sons of my Father as well; let my father-in-law get back his lost eyesight, and may he get back his lost kingdom. This is another boon that I want. Thou art the Lord of the world. So grant me this boon, too, that I may have this my very body for a *lakh* years when I may go to Vaikuṇṭha with Satyavāna.

Now I am eager to hear the various fruitions of *karmas* of the several *jīvas*. Kindly narrate them and oblige.'

13-70. Dharma said: 'You are very chaste. So what you have thought will verily come to pass. Now I describe the fruition of *karmas* of the *jīvas*. Listen. Excepting this holy land of Bhārata, nowhere do the people enjoy wholly the fruition of their twofold *karmas*, good and bad. It is only the Suras, Daityas, Dānavas, Gandharvas, Rākṣasas and men that do *karmas*.

The beasts and the other *jīvas* do not do *karmas*. The special *jīvas*—men, etc. —experience the fruition of their *karmas* in heavens, hells and in all the other *yonis* (wombs). Specially, as the *jīvas* roam in all the different *yonis*, they enjoy their *karmas*, good or bad, as the case may be, carved in their previous births. The good works get fructified in heavens; and the bad works lead the *jīvas* to hells. This *karma* can be got rid of by *bhakti*. This *bhakti* is of two kinds: *nirguṇa* of the nature of *nirvāṇa;* and *saguṇa* towards Prakṛti; of the astute of Brahman, and with Māyā inherent.

Diseases come as the result of bad and ignorant actions, and healthiness comes from good and certain scientific *karmas*. Similar are the remarks for short and long lives for happiness and pain. By bad works, one becomes blind or deformed in body. So by doing excellent *karmas*, one acquires *siddhis*, etc.. These are spoken generally. I will now speak in detail; listen. This is very secret even in *Purāṇas* and *Smṛtis*. In this Bhāratavarṣa men are the best of all the various classes of beings. The Brāhmaṇas are the best of men and are best in all inds of *karmas*. They are responsible, too, for their actions. O chaste one! Of the Brāhmaṇas, again, those that are attached to the Brāhmaṇas are the best. The Brāhmaṇas are of two kinds as they are *sakāma* (with desires) or *niṣkāma* (without desires). The *niṣkāmī* Brāhmaṇas are superior to the *sakāmī* Brāhmaṇas. For the *sakāmīs* are to enjoy the fruits of their *karmas*, while the *niṣkāmī* Brāhmaṇas are perfectly free from any such disturbances—they have not to come back to this field of *karma*. The *niṣkāma-bhaktas* after they quit their bodies, go to a place free from sickness or disease, pure and perfect. From there they do not come back. The *niṣkāma-bhaktas* assuming the divine forms go to Goloka and worship the highest God, the highest Self, the two-armed Kṛṣṇa. The *sakāmī* Vaiṣṇavas go to Vaikuṇṭha; but they come back in Bhārata and get into the wombs of the twice-born. By degrees they also become *niṣkāma* when they certainly acquire pure undefiled *bhakti*. The Brāhmaṇas and Vaiṣṇavas that are *sakāmīs* in all the births, never get that pure undefiled intellect and never get pure devotion to Viṣṇu. The Brāhmaṇas living in the *tīrthas,* sacred places of pilgrimage and attached to *tapas*, go to Brahmaloka the region of Brahmā; they again come down to Bhārata. Those that are devotedly

attached to their own *dharma* (religion) and reside in places other than *tīrthas*, go to Satyaloka and again come to Bhārata. The Brāhmaṇas following their own *dharma* and devoted to the Sun go to the world of the Sun and again come to Bhārata. And those who are devoted to Mūla-Prakṛti and devoted to *niṣkāma-dharma* go to Maṇidvīpa and have not to come back from thither. The *bhaktas* of Śiva, Śakti and Gaṇeśa, and attached to their own *dharmas,* respectively go to the Śiva-loka and return from thence. Those Brāhmaṇas that worship the other Devas and attached to their own *dharmas* go to those regions of theirs respectively and again come to Bhārata. Attached to their own *dharmas*, the *niṣkāmī-bhaktas* of Hari go by their *bhakti* step-by-step to the region of Śrī Hari.

Those who are not attached to their own *dharmas* and do not worship the Devas, always bent on doing things as they like without any regard to their *ācāras* go certainly to hells. No doubt about this. The Brāhmaṇas and the other three *varṇas* attached to their own *dharmas* all enjoy the fruits of their good works. But those who do not do their *svadharma*, go verily down into hells. They do not came to Bhārata for their rebirth, they enjoy their fruits of *karmas* in hells! Therefore the four *varṇas* ought to follow their own *dharmas.* The Brāhmaṇas are to remain attached to their own *dharmas* and give their daughters in marriage to the similarly qualified Brāhmaṇas. They then go to the Candraloka, the region of the Moon. There they remain for the lifetimes of the fourteen Indras. And if the girl be given with ornaments, the results obtained would be twice. If the girl be given with a desire in view, then that world is obtained; but if the girl be given without any desire but to fulfil the God's will and God's satisfaction only, then one would not have to go to that world. They go to Viṣṇu-loka, bereft of the fruits of all *karmas*. Those that give to the Brāhmaṇas pasture grounds and cattle, silver, gold, garment, fruits and water, go to the Candraloka and live there for one *manvantara*. They live long in those regions by virtue of that merit. Again those that give gold, cows, copper, etc., to the holy Brāhmaṇas go to the Sūrya-loka, the region of the Sun, and live there for one *ayuta* (10,000 years), free from diseases, for a long time. Those that give lands and lots of wealth to the Brāhmaṇas go to the Viṣṇu-loka and to the beautiful

śvetadvīpa. And there they live as long as the Sun and Moon exist. O Muni! The meritorious persons live long in that wide region. Those who give with devotion dwelling places to the Brāhmaṇas, go to the happy Viṣṇu-loka. And there, in that great Viṣṇu-loka, they live for years equal to the number of molecules in that house. He who offers a dwelling house in honor of any Deva, goes to the region of that Deva and remains there for a number of years equivalent to the number of particles in that house. The lotus-born Brahmā said that if one offers a royal palace, one obtains a result four times and if one offers a country, one gets the result one hundred times that; again if one offers an excellent country, twice as much merit one acquires. One who dedicates a tank for the expiation of all one's sins, lives in Janar-loka (one of the pious regions) for a period equivalent to the number of particles therein. If any man offers a *vāpī* (well) in preference to other gifts, one gets tenfold fruits thereby. If one offers seven *vāpīs*, one acquires the fruits of offering one tank. A *vāpī* is one which is four thousand *dhanus* long and which is as much wide or less. If offered to a good bridegroom, then the giving of a daughter in marriage is equivalent to a dedication of ten *vāpīs*. And if the girl be offered with ornaments, twice the merits accrue. The same merit accrues in clearing the bed of the mud of a pond as in digging it. So for the *vāpī* (well).

O chaste one! He who plants an Aśvattha tree and dedicates it to a godly purpose, lives for one *ayuta* years in Taparloka. O Sāvitrī! He who dedicates a flower garden for the acquirement of all sorts of good, lives for one *ayuta* years in Dhruvaloka.

O chaste one! He who gives a *vimāna* or any sort of excellent carriage in honor of Viṣṇu, in this Hindusthān, lives for one *manvantara* in Viṣṇuloka. And if one gives a *vimāna* of variegated colors and workmanship, four times the result accrues. And one who gives a palanquin acquires half the fruits. Again if anybody gives, out of devotion, a swinging temple (Dol-Mandir) to Bhagavān Śrī Hari, lives for one hundred *manvantras* in the region of Viṣṇu. O chaste one! He who makes a gift of a royal road, decorated with palatial buildings on either side, lives with great honor and

love in that Indraloka for one *ayuta* years. Equal results follow whether the above things are offered to the Gods or to the Brāhmaṇas. He enjoys that which he gives. No giving, no enjoying. After enjoying the heavenly pleasures, etc., the virtuous person takes birth in Bhārata as a Brāhmaṇa or in other good families, in due order, and ultimately in the Brāhmaṇa families. The virtuous Brāhmaṇa, after he has enjoyed the heavenly pleasures, takes his birth again in Bhārata in Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya or in Vaiśya families. A Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya can never obtain Brāhmaṇahood, even if he performs asceticism for one *koti kalpas*. This is stated in the *śrutis*. Without enjoying the fruits, no *karma* can be exhausted even in one hundred *koti kalpas*. So the fruits of the *karmas* must be enjoyed, whether they be auspicious or inauspicious. By the help of seeing the Devas and seeing the *tīrthas* again and again, purity is acquired. O Sāvitrī! So now I have told you something. What more do you want to hear? Say.'

Here ends the Twenty-Ninth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the anecdote of Sāvitrī on the fruits of making gifts and on the effects of Karmas in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXX—the Fruition of Karmas

1. Sāvitrī said: "O Dharmarājan! Kindly tell me in detail about those works that lead the meritorious persons to the Heavens and various other spheres."

2-20. Dharmarāj said: "O Child! He who gives rice and food to the Brāhmaṇas in India, goes to Śivaloka where he dwells with great respect for years equivalent to the measure of that food. This *anna-dāna,* giving boiled rice and other eatables, is a great *dān* (charity) and this can be done not only to the Brāhmaṇas but to the other castes also, where similar results also follow. There is not, nor will be, any other charity superior to this charity of *anna,* rice and other eatables. For here no distinction is made as to what caste will get it or not, nor the discrimination of time, when to give such a charity. O child! Seats (*āsanas*) given to the Devas and the

Brāhmaṇas carry the donor to the Viṣṇuloka, where he dwells for *ayuta* years with great respect and love. Giving excellent cows yielding milk to Brāhmaṇas take the donor to Viṣṇuloka, where he is glorified and remains for years equivalent to the number of pores in that cow or cows. And if cows be given on a meritorious day, four times the merits accrue, and if given in a sacred place of pilgrimage, hundred times the result occurs; and if given in a *tīrtha* where Nārāyaṇa is worshipped, *koti* times the results accrue. He who gives with devotion cows to the Brāhmaṇas in Bhārata, remains in the Candraloka for one *ayuta* years and is glorified. He who gives a two-mouthed cow to a Brāhmaṇa, goes to Viṣṇuloka and remains there for as many years as there exist the numbers of hairs on the body of that cow and is glorified. A gift of a beautiful white umbrella to a Brāhmaṇa makes one go to Varuṇaloka for *ayuta* years, where he remains with great pleasure. Giving garments to the diseased Brāhmaṇas makes one fit to remain with glory in Vayuloka for one *ayuta* years. Giving to a Brāhmaṇa the *śālagrāma* with garments makes one remain with glory in Vaikuṇṭha as long as there exist the Sun and Moon. Giving a beautiful bedding to a Brāhmaṇa, glorifies a man in the Candraloka as long as there exist the Sun and Moon. To give lights to the Devas and Brāhmaṇa glorifies a man in Agṇiloka (the region of Fire) for one *manvantara*. To give elephants to the Brāhmaṇas in Bhārata, makes one sit in the same throne with Indra for his life period.

Giving horses to the Brāhmaṇas makes one remain in Varuṇaloka for fourteen Indra's lifetimes. Giving a good palanquin to a Brāhmaṇa makes one remain in the Varuṇaloka for fourteen Indra's lifetimes. Giving a good site or a good orchard to a Brāhmaṇa leads one to the Vayuloka where he remains with glory for one *manvantara*. Giving a white *cāmara* and fan to a Brāhmaṇa leads the donor to the Vayuloka where he remains for one *ayuta* years. Giving grains and jewels make one long-lived, and both the donors and receivers go certainly to Vaikuṇṭha.

21-40. He who always recites the name of Śrī Hari lives forever, and Death goes far far away from him. The intelligent man that celebrates the

Swinging Festival (Dol-Yātrā) in the last quarter of the Full Moon night in this land of Bhārata, becomes liberated while living, enjoying pleasures in this world, and goes in the end to Viṣṇuloka, where he remains for one hundred *manvantaras;* there is no doubt about this. If the Swinging Festival be performed under the influence of the asterism Uttara Phālgunī then the fruits become doubled; this is the saying of Brahmā Himself. The performer lives to the end of a *kalpa*. To give *til* (sesamum) to a Brāhmaṇa, leads one to Śiva-loka, where one enjoys for a number of years equal to the number of *til*. Then one is born in a good *yoni* and becomes longlived and happy. To give a copper plate yields double the effect. To give in India a chaste wife with garments and ornaments to a Brāhmaṇa and then to purchase her with an equivalent in gold leads one to Candraloka where one remains for fourteen Indra's lifetimes, and enjoys day and night the celestial Apsarās. Thence the donor goes to the Gandharva-loka for one *ayuta* years and day and night enjoys Urvaśī. Then he gets for thousand births chaste, fortunate, wealthy, gentle and sweet-speaking, beautiful wives. He who gives nice and delicious fruits to the Brāhmaṇas, remains with glory in the Indra-loka for a number of years equivalent to the fruits. He gets again a good *yoni* (birth) and gets excellent sons. To give a thousand trees while there are fruits on them, or nice fruits only to the Brāhmaṇas, makes one enjoy the Heavens for a long, long time and he then comes back to Bhārata. To give various things and good edifices with grains, etc., to the Brāhmaṇas leads one to the regions of the Devas, where he remains for one hundred *manvantaras*. Then he gets a very good birth and becomes the master of abundant wealth. He who gives land with devotion to the Brāhmaṇas certainly goes for one hundred *manvantaras* and remains there in glory for one hundred *manvantras;* and coming again to be born in good wombs, they become Kings. The earth does not leave him for hundred births. He becomes prosperous, wealthy, possesses many sons and becomes the lord of his subjects. He who gives a good village with pastureland cows, dwells with glory in Vaikuṇṭha for one *lakh manvantaras*. Then he gets a good birth in a high caste family and obtains a *lakh* villages. The earth quits him not even if he be born a *lakh* times. (This is very bad then, to one who does not like to be born again).

41-60. He who gives a village inhabited by good and obedient subjects with ripe excellent grains, various tanks, trees and adorned with fruits and leaves dwells in Kailāsa with great glory for ten *lakh* Indra's lifetimes. Getting again born in a high family, he becomes Rāja Dhirāja in Bhārata and obtains *niyuta* towns. There is no doubt about this. The earth quits him not, even if he be born *ayuta* times. Really he gets the highest prosperity in this earth. He who gives to a Brāhmaṇa one hundred towns and countries, inhabited by good or mediocre subjects, with wells, tanks, and various trees, remains with glory in Vaikuṇṭha for one *koti manvantaras*. Then he becomes born in this earth in a high caste family, becomes the Lord of Jambudvīpa and attains in this earth great prosperity like Indra. The earth quits him not even if he comes here *koti* times; in reality he is a Mahātmā (a great soul man), Rājrājeśvara (the Lord of Kings) and lives up to the end of a *kalpa*. He who gives his whole property to a Brāhmaṇa, gets in the end four times that; there is no doubt about this. He who gives Jambudvīpa to an ascetic Brāhmaṇa, gets undoubtedly in the end one hundred times the fruit. If you give away Jambudvīpa, the whole earth; if you travel all the *tīrthas*, if you perform all sorts of asceticisms, if you give shelter to all, if you make gifts of all sorts, know that you will have to come again to be reborn in this earth; but if you become a devotee of Mūla-Prakṛti, then be sure that you won't have to come here and be reborn. The devotees of Mūla-Prakṛti go to Maṇidvīpa, the highest place of Śrī Bhuvaneśarī Devī, remain there and see the fall of innumerable Brahmās. The worshippers of the Devī Mantra, when they quit their mortal coils, assume divine appearances endowed with *vibhūtis,* maṇifestations of powers—and free from birth, death and old age, assume the *sārūpya,* the same form as the Devī and remain in Her Service. They reside in Maṇidvīpa and see the partial *pralayas*. The Devas die, the Siddhas die, the whole universe vanishes; but the Devī Bhaktas never die and they remain free form birth, death, and old age. He who offers Tulasī leaf to Bhagavān Hari in the month of Kārtik resides for three *yugas* in the temple of Hari. Getting again a good birth, he acquires the devotion to Śrī Hari and becomes the foremost of those who restrain their senses. He who bathes in the Ganges early before the rising of the Sun remains in enjoyment in the temple of Hari for

sixty thousand *yugas*. Getting again a good birth, he gets the Viṣṇu *mantra*, and quitting his mortal coil, becomes united with the feet of Śrī Hari.

61-77. He has not to come back from Vaikuṇṭha to this earth. He remains in Hari's service and gets the same form of Hari. He who bathes daily in the Ganges becomes purified like the Sun and gets the result of performing the horse-sacrifice at every step. The earth becomes purified by the dust of his feet and he enjoys in Vaikuṇṭha as long as the Sun and Moon exist. Then again he becomes born in a good and beautiful womb, and is liberated by acquiring devotion to Hari. He becomes very energetic and the foremost of the ascetics, pure, religious, learned, and self-restrained. When the Sun comes midway between Pisces and Cancer and heats intensely the earth, the man who in Bhārata gives cool water to drink to the people, resides in happiness in Kailāśa for fourteen Indra's lifetimes. Getting again a good birth here, he becomes beautiful, happy, devoted to Śiva, energetic and expert in the *Vedas* and *Vedaṅgas*. He who gives to a Brāhmaṇa the *śaktu* (*sattu*, powders in parched oat) in the month of Vaiśāka enjoys in the Śiva temple for as many years as there are number of particles in that quantity of *sattu*. He who performs the Kṛṣṇa Janmāstamī vow in this Bhārata, is freed from the sins incurred in his hundred births; there is no doubt about this. The observer of the vow remains in great enjoyment in Vaikuṇṭha for fourteen Indra's lifetimes, gets again a good birth here and acquires Hari-*bhakti*. He who performs the Śivarātri vow in this Bhāratavarṣa, resides with great joy in Śiva-loka for seven *manvantaras*. He who offers the Bel leaves to Śiva in Śivarātri time, resides with great joy in Śiva's abode for as many *yugas* as there are number of leaves. Getting again a good birth here, he acquires the devotion to Śiva and becomes learned, prosperous and possesses sons, subjects and lands. He who performs vow and worships Śaṅkara in the month of Chaitra or Māgha and who, with a branch of a tree in hand, dances day and night for one month, or half a month, for ten days or for seven days, dwells in Śiva-loka for as many *yugas* as the number of days he dances. He who performs the vow of Śrī Rāma Navamī, lives in the abode of Viṣṇu for seven *manvantaras* in great joy. Getting again a good

birth, he becomes devoted to Śrī Rāma, the foremost of those who have self restraint, and he becomes very wealthy.

78-87. He who performs the Sāradīyā Pūjā, the great Durgā Pūjā in the month of autumn, of the Mūla-Prakṛti with incense, lights, offerings of food, and animal sacrifices of buffaloes, goats, sheep, rhinoceros, frogs or other animals, together with dancing, music, and various other auspicious things, resides in Śiva-loka for seven *manvantaras*. Getting an excellent birth and a pure understanding, he gets unbounded prosperity, sons and no doubt, grandsons and he becomes a very powerful sovereign possessing many horses and elephants. There is no doubt about this. Again he who worships daily with devotion for a fortnight beginning from the eighth day of the bright fortnight the Mahā-Devilakṣmī, remains in the region of Goloka for fourteen Indra's lifetimes. Then obtaining an excellent birth, he becomes a sovereign. He who in the full moon night in the month of Kārtik prepares a *rāsa-mandal* with one hundred *gopas* and *gopīs* and worships Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā in *śālagrāma* or in images with sixteen varieties of offerings, remains in Goloka for Brahmā's lifetime and coming again to Bhārata acquires unflinching devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

88-99. And when this *bhakti* becomes greatly intensified, he gets initiated into Śrī Hari *mantra* and after quitting his mortal coil, goes to the Goloka. Then he gets *sārūpya* (the same form) of Kṛṣṇa and becomes the chief *pārisad* (attendant of Kṛṣṇa) and, becoming free from old age, he has no fear to fall again down to this earth. He who observes the Ekādaśī day, remains fasting and performing penances in the bright or dark eleventh day, remains in Vaikuṇṭha in great enjoyment and comfort. Then, again coming into this Bhārata he becomes a devotee of Hari. And when that *bhakti* is intensified he becomes solely devoted to Hari and quitting his mortal coil, goes again to the Goloka and gets the *sārūpya* of Kṛṣṇa and becomes His *pārisada* (attendant). Then, freed of old age and death, he does not fall. He who worships Indra in the month of Bhādra in the twelfth day of the white fortnight is worshipped in the regions of Indra for sixty thousand years. He who performs in Bhārata the worship of the Sun on Sunday *sankrānti*

(when the Sun goes from one sign to another) and the bright seventh *tithi*, according to due rules and ceremonies and eats the food called *havisyānna* (rice boiled in ghee), dwells in the Sūryaloka for fourteen Indra's lifetimes. Then coming to Bhārata, he becomes free from all diseases and becomes prosperous. He who worships Sāvitrī on the fourteenth day of the black fortnight dwells in the region of Brahmā for seven *manvantaras* with great *eclāt* and glory. Coming again to Bhārata he enjoys beauty, unequalled valor, long life, knowledge and prosperity. He who worships on the fifth day of the bright fortnight in the month of Māgha, with his senses controlled and full of devotion, the Devī Sarasvatī with sixteen articles of food, resides in Maṇidvīpa for one day and one night of Brahmā.

100-140. On getting rebirth, he becomes a poet and a learned man. He who daily gives with devotion for his whole life, cow and gold to a Brāhmaṇa dwells in Viṣṇu-loka for twice as many years as there are the numbers of hairs on the bodies of these cows, plays and jests with Viṣṇu and doing auspicious things he finds pleasure. In the end he comes again to this Bhārata and becomes the King of Kings. He becomes fortunate, prosperous, possesses many sons, becomes learned, full of knowledge and happy in every way. He who feeds a Brāhmaṇa here with sweetmeats goes to Viṣṇu-loka and enjoys there for as many years as there are hairs on the body of the Brāhmaṇa. In the end he comes again to Bhārata and becomes happy, wealthy, learned, long-lived, fortunate and very powerful. He who utters the name of Hari or gives the *mantra* of Hari to others, is worshipped in Viṣṇu-loka for as many *yugas* as the number of times the name or *mantra* was uttered. Coming again to Bhārata, he becomes happy and wealthy. And if such things be done in Nārāyaṇa Kṣetra, *koti* times the above results ensue. He who repeats the name of Hari *koti* times in Nārāyaṇa Kṣetra, no doubt becomes freed of all sins and liberated while living, and he will not get rebirth. He lives always in Vaikuṇṭha. He gets the *sālokya* (the same region as Viṣṇu), is not liable to fall, becomes a *bhakta* of Viṣṇu. He who daily worships the earthen phallic symbol (after making it daily) for his whole life, goes to the Śiva-loka and dwells there for as many years as there are the number of particles of earth. Getting rebirth he becomes the King of

Kings. He who worships daily the *śālagrāma* stone and eats the water (after bathing it) is glorified in Vaikuṇṭha for one hundred Brahmā's lives and becomes born again, then he acquires the rare Hari-*bhakti* and quitting his mortal coil goes to Viṣṇu-loka, whence he is not to return. He who performs all the *tapasyās* (asceticims) and observes all the *vratas* (vows), dwells in Vaikuṇṭha for fourteen Indra's lifetimes. Getting rebirth in Bhārata he becomes the King of Kings and then he becomes liberated. He is not to return any more. He who bathes in all the *tīrthas* and makes a journey round the whole world, gets *nirvāṇa*. He is not reborn. He who performs the Horse-Sacrifice in this holy land Bhārata enjoys half the Indraship for as many years as there are hairs on the body of the horse. He who performs a Rājasūya Sacrifice, gets four times the above result. Of all the sacrifices, the Devī-yajñā, or the Sacrifice before the Devī is the Best. O fair one! Of old, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Indra and when Tripurāsura was killed, Mahādeva did such a sacrifice. O Beautiful One! This sacrifice before the Śakti is the highest and best of all the sacrifices. There is nothing like this in the three worlds. This Great Sacrifice was done of yore by Dakṣa when he collected abundant sacrificial materials of all sorts. And a quarrel ensued on this account between Dakṣa and Śaṅkara. The Brāhmaṇas conducting the sacrifice cursed Nandī and others. And Nandī cursed the Brāhmaṇas. Mahādeva, therefore, disallowed the sacrifice and brought it to a dead stop. Of yore the Prajāpati Dakṣa did this Devī-yajñā; it was done also by Dharma, Kaśyapa Ananta, Kardama, Svāyambhuva Manu, his son Priyavrata, Śiva, Sanat Kumāra, Kapila and Dhruva. The performance of this sacrifice brings fruits equal to performing thousands and thousands of Rājasūya sacrifices. Therefore there is no other sacrifice greater than this Devī-yajñā. One becomes surely endowed with a long life of one hundred years and is liberated while living. He becomes equal to Viṣṇu in knowledge, energy, strength, and asceticism. This is as true as anything. O child! This Devī-yajñā is the best and highest of all the sacrifices as Viṣṇu is the highest amongst the Devas; Nārada, amongst the Vaiṣṇavas; the *Vedas*, amongst all the *śāstras;* the Brāhmaṇas amongst all the castes; the Ganges amongst the sacred places of pilgrimages, Śiva amongst the Holy of Holies, the *ekādaśī* vow amongst all the *vratas;* Tulasī, amongst all the flowers; the

Moon, amongst the asterisms; Garuḍa, amongst the birds; Prakṛti, Rādhā, Sarasvatī and Earth amongst the females; the mind, amongst the quick-going and restless senses; Brahmā, amongst the Prajāpatis; Brahmā, amongst all the subjects; Vṛndāvana, amongst all the forests; Bharatvarṣa, amongst all the *varṣas;* Lakṣmī, amongst the prosperous; Sarasvatī, amongst the learned; Durgā, amongst the chaste; Radhikā, amongst the fortunate.

If one hundred horse sacrifices are performed, Indrahood is sure to be obtained. It is by the influence of bathing in all the *tīrthas*, performing all the sacrifices, observing all the *vratas*, practicing all the austerities, studying all the *V*edas and circumambulating the whole earth, that this Highest Śakti's service is obtained and this service of Śakti is the direct cause of *mukti* (liberation). To worship the lotus feet of the Devī is the best and highest, is stated in all the *Purāṇas*, in all the *Vedas*, and in all the *Itihāsas*. To sing the glories of Mūla-Prakṛti, to meditate on Her, to chant Her Name and attributes, to remember Her *stotras*, bow down before Her, to repeat Her Name, and to drink daily Her *pādodoka* (water after washing Her feet) and the offerings already offered to Her, these are approved of by all; and everyone desires this. So worship, worship this Mūla-Prakṛti, Who is of the nature of Brahman, and, lo! Who is again endowed with Māyā. O child! Take your husband live happily with him in your home. O child! Thus I have described to you the fruition of the *karmas*. This is auspicious to every human being, desired by all and approved of by all. The Real Knowledge springs from this. There is no doubt about this.'

Here ends the Thirtieth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the conversation between Sāvitrī and Yama and on the fruition of Karmas in the Great Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXI—Yama gives Śakti Mantra to Sāvitrī

1-2. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! Hearing thus the supreme nature of Mūla-Prakṛti from Dharmarāja Yama, the two eyes of Sāvitrī were filled with tears of joy and her whole body was filled with a thrill of rapture, joy and

ecstacy. She again addressed Yama: 'O Dharmarāja! To sing the glories of Mūla-Prakṛti is the only means of saving all. This takes away the old age and death of both the speaker and the hearer.

3-12. This is the Supreme Place of the Dānavas, the Siddhas, the ascetics. This is the *yoga* of the *yogīs* and this is studying the *Vedas* of the *vaidikas*. Nothing can compare even to one sixteenth of the sixteenth parts of the (full) merits of those who are in Śakti's service; whether *mukti*, immortality, or attaining endless *siddhis*, nothing can compare to it. O Thou, the foremost of the knowers of the *Vedas!* I have heard by and by everything from Thee. Now describe to me how to worship Mūla-Prakṛti and what are the ends of *karmas*, auspicious and inauspicious.'

Thus saying, the chaste Sāvitrī bowed down her head and began to praise Yama in *stotras* according to the *Vedas*. She said: 'O Dharmarājan! The Sun practiced of yore very hard austerities at Puṣkara and worshipped *dharma*. On this, Dharma Himself became born of Sūrya as his son. And Thou art that son of Sūrya, the incarnation of *dharma*. So I bow down to Thee. Thou art the witness of all the *jīvas;* Thou seest them equally; hence Thy name is Samana. I bow down to Thee. Sometimes Thou by Thy own will takest away the lives of beings. Hence Thy name is Kritānta. Obeisance to Thee! Thou holdest the rod to distribute justice and pronounce sentence on them and to destroy the sins of the *jīvas;* hence Thy name is Dandadhara; so I bow down to Thee. Any *jīva*, in course of his travelling towards *mukti*, can expect to pass through the stage of Yamaship; and if he pleases, he can become a Yama. At all times Thou destroyest the universe. None can resist Thee. Hence Thou art named Kāla; so obeisance to Thee! Thou art an ascetic, devoted to Brahman, self-controlled, and the distributor of the fruits of *karmas* to the *jīvas;* Thou restrainest Thy senses. Hence Thou art called Yama. Therefore I bow down to Thee.

13-17. Thou art delighted with Thy Own Self; Thou art omniscient; Thou art the tormentor of the sinners and the friend of the virtuous. Hence Thy name is Punya Mitra; so I bow down to Thee. Thou art born as a part of

Brahman; the fire of Brahman is shining through Thy body. Thou dost meditate on Parabrahman, Thou art the Lord. Obeisance to Thee!'

O Muni! Thus praising Yama, she bowed down at his feet. Yama gave her the *mantra* of Mūla-Prakṛti. How to worship Her and He began to recite the fruition of good *karmas*. O Nārada! He who recites these eight hymns to Yama early in the morning, getting up from his bed, is freed of the fear of death. Rather he becomes freed of all his sins. So much so, that even if he be a veritable awful sinner and if he recites daily with devotion this *yamāstakam*, Yama purifies him thoroughly."

Here ends the Thirty-first Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the Yama's giving Śakti Mantra to Sāvitrī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXII—the Various Hells for Sinners

1-28. Nārāyaṇa said: "Then, initiating her with the Great Seed, the *ādi* radical *mantra* of the Mahā-Śakti Śrī Bhuvaneśvarī, in accordance with due rules, the son of Sūrya began to recite the various effects of various *karmas*, auspicious and inauspicious."

'Never do persons go to hell who perform good *karmas;* it is only the bad works that lead men to hells. The different *Purāṇas* narrate various heavens. The *jīvas* go to those places as the effects of their various good *karmas*. The good *karmas* do not lead men to hells; but the bad *karmas* do lead them veritably to various hideous hells. In different *śāstras,* different hell-pits are ascertained. Different works lead men to different hells. O child! Those hell-pits are very wide, deep, painful and tormenting, very horrible and ugly. Of these, eighty six pits or *kuṇḍas* are prominent. Many other *kuṇḍas* exist. Now listen to the names of the *kuṇḍas* mentioned in the *Vedas*. Their names are: Vahni Kuṇḍa, Tapta Kuṇḍa, Ksāra Kuṇḍa, Bhayānaka Kuṇḍa, Vit Kuṇḍa, Mūtra Kuṇḍa, Ślesma Kuṇḍa, Gara Kuṇḍa, Dūsikā Kuṇḍa, Vasā Kuṇḍa, Śukra Kuṇḍa, Śonita Kuṇḍa, Aśrū Kuṇḍa, Gātramala Kuṇḍa, Karṇamala Kuṇḍa, Majjā Kuṇḍa, Māmsa Kuṇḍa,

impassable Nakra Kuṇḍa, Loma Kuṇḍa, Keśa Kuṇḍa, impassable Asthi Kuṇḍa, Tāmra Kuṇḍa, the exceedingly hot and painful Lauha Kuṇḍa (the pit of molten iron), Charma Kuṇḍa, the hot Surā Kuṇḍa, sharp Thorny Kuṇḍa, Visa Kuṇḍa, the hot Taila Kuṇḍa, very heavy Astra Kuṇḍa, Krimi Kuṇḍa, Pūya Kuṇḍa, terrible Sarpa Kuṇḍa, Maśaka Kuṇḍa, Damśa Kuṇḍa, dreadful Garala Kuṇḍa, Vajra Damstra Vriśchika Kuṇḍa, śara Kuṇḍa, Sūla Kuṇḍa, awful Khadga Kuṇḍa, Gola Kuṇḍa, Nakra Kuṇḍa, sorrowful Kāka Kuṇḍa, Manthāna Kuṇḍa, Vīja Kuṇḍa, painful Vajra Kuṇḍa, hot Pātśāna Kuṇḍa, sharp Pāśāna Kuṇḍa, Lālā Kuṇḍa, Masī Kuṇḍa, Chakra Kuṇḍa, Vakra Kuṇḍa, very terrible Kūrma Kuṇḍa, Jvālā Kuṇḍa, Bhasma Kuṇḍa, Dagdha Kuṇḍa, and others. Besides these, there are the Taptasūchī, Asipatra, Ksuradhāra, Sūchīmukha, Gokhāmūkha, Kūmbhīpāka, Kālasūtra, Matsyoda, Krimi, Kantuka, Pāmśubhojya, Pāśavesta, Sūlaprota, Prakampana, Ulkāmakha, Andhakūpa, Vedhana, Tādana, Jālarandhra, Dehachūrna, Dalana, śosana, Kasa, śūrpa, Jvālāmūkha, Dhūmāndha, Nāgavestana and various others.

O Savitri! The *kuṇḍas* give much pain and torment greatly the sinners; they are under the constant watch of innumerable servants. They hold rods in their hands; some of them have nooses; others hold clubs, *Śaktis*, awful scimitars; they are fierce fanatics, maddened with vanity. All are filled with *tamo-guṇa*—merciless, irresistible, energetic, fearless and tawny-eyed (like copper). Some of them are *yogīs*; some are *siddhas*, they assume various forms. When the sinners are about to die, they see these servants of Yama. But those who do their own duties, who are *śāktas,* Sauras, or Gānapatyas or those who are virtuous *siddha-yogīs*, they never see the servants of Yama. Those who are engaged in their own *dharmas*, who are possessed of wisdom, who are endowed with knowledge, who are mentally strong, who are untouched by fear, who are endowed with the feelings of the Devas, and those who are real Vaiṣṇavas, they never see these servants of Yama. O chaste one! Thus I have enumerated to you the Kuṇḍas. Now hear who live in the *kuṇḍas*.'

Here ends the Thirty-second Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the enumeration of various hells for sinners in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXIII—Destinies of the Sinners

1-19. Dharmarājan said: "Those that are in Hari's service, pure, the *siddhas* who have attained success in *yoga*, the performers of *vratas* (vows), the chaste, the ascetics, the Brahmachāris never go to hells. There is no doubt about this. Those persons that are proud of their strong positions and who use very harsh burning words to their friends, they go to Vahni Kuṇḍa and live there for as many years as there are hairs on his body; next they attain animal births for three births and get themselves scorched under the strong heat of the Sun. He goes to the Tapta Kuṇḍa hell who does not entertain any Brāhmaṇa guest with any eatables who comes to his house hungry and thirsty. He lives there for as many years as there are hairs on his body and he has to sleep on a bed of fire, very tormenting. Then he will have to be born for seven births as birds. If anybody washes clothing with salt on Sunday, or on the day of *samkrānti* (when the Sun enters another sign), or on any new-moon day or on any *śrāddha* day (when funeral ceremonies are performed), will have to go to the Ksāra Kuṇḍa hell where he remains for as many years as there are threads in that clothing; finally he becomes born for seven births as a veritable washerman. The wretch that abuses Mūla-Prakṛti, the *Vedas*, the *śāstras*, *Purāṇas*, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and the other Devas, Gaurī, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and the other Devīs, goes to the hell named Bhayānaka Narakakuṇḍa. There is no other hell more tormenting than this. The sinners live here for many *kalpas* and ultimately become serpents. There is no sin greater than the abuse of the Devī. There is no expiation for it. So one ought never to abuse the Devī.

If one discontinues the allowances given by oneself or other persons to the Devas or Brāhmaṇas, one goes to Visthā Kuṇḍa and has to eat faeces there for sixty thousand years, and finally to be born in Bhārata as worms in faeces the same number of years. If any person without the owner's

permission digs another's tank dried of water, or urinates in the water of any tank, he goes to Mūtra Kuṇḍa and drinks urine for as many years as there are the particles in that tank. Then he becomes born in this Bhārata its an ox for one hundred years. If any person eats good things himself without giving any portion thereof to the member of his family, he goes to Ślesma Kuṇḍa where he eats phlegm for full one hundred years. Then he becomes born as Preta (disembodied spirits) in this Bhārata for hundred years and drinks phlegm, urine and pus; then he becomes pure. He who does not support his father, mother, spiritual teacher, wife, sons, daughters and the helpless persons, goes to Gara Kuṇḍa where he eats poison for full one hundred years. Finally he becomes born and wanders as Bhūtas (disembodied spirits). Then he becomes pure.

20-50. He who becomes angry and shrinks his eyes at the sight of a guest who has come to his house offends the Devas or Pitṛs, who do not accept the water offered to them by that villain. On the contrary, he earns all the sins of *brahma-hātyā* (murder of a Brāhmaṇa and so forth) and finally goes to Dūsikā Kuṇḍa where he remains for one hundred years and eats polluted things. Then wandering as Bhūtas for one hundred years he becomes purified. If anybody makes a gift of any article to a Brāhmaṇa and then again gives that article to a different man, he goes to Vasā Kuṇḍa where he eats marrow for one hundred years. Then he has to roam about in India for seven births as a *krikalāsa* (lizard) and finally he becomes born as a very poor man with a very short life. If any woman or any man makes another of a different sex eat semen, out of passion, he goes to Śukra Kuṇḍa where he drinks semen for one hundred years. Then he crawls about as worms for one hundred years. And then he gets purified. If anybody beats a Brāhmaṇa who is a family preceptor and causes his blood to come out, he will have to go to Rakta Kuṇḍa where he has to drink blood for one hundred years. Finally he has to roam about for seven births in India as tigers; then he becomes pure by degrees. If anybody mocks and laughs at any devotee of Kṛṣṇa who sings with rapt consciousness and sheds tears of joy, he will have to go to Aśru Kuṇḍa where he drinks tears for one hundred years. Then he has to roam as Caṇḍāla for three births and then he

becomes pure. He who always cheats his friends, lives for one hundred years in Gātramala Kuṇḍa. Then roaming about for three births as an ass and for three births as a fox concurrently, he becomes purified. Out of vanity, if anybody jests at a deaf person, he goes to Karṇamala Kuṇḍa where he eats for one hundred years the wax of the ear. Next he comes to the earth as a deaf and very poor man for seven births, when at last he gets purified. If anybody commits murder out of greed to support his family, he goes to the hell Majjā Kuṇḍa where he eats marrow for one *lakh* years. Next he becomes a fish for seven births, for seven births he becomes a mosquito, for three births he becomes a boar, for seven births he becomes a cock, deer and other animals concurrently; at last he gets purified. If any stupid person sells the daughter whom he has supported, out of greed for money, he goes to Mānsa Kuṇḍa and lives there for as many years as there are hairs on her body. The Yama's servants beat him with their clubs. His head becomes overloaded with the burden of flesh; and, out of hunger, he licks the blood coming out of his head. Next that sinner comes to Bhārata and for sixty years becomes a worm in any daughter's faeces, for seven births he becomes a hunter; for three births, a boar; for seven births, cock; for seven births, frog; for seven births, leech; and for seven births, crow; when he gets purified. One who shaves on the day of observing vows, fasting and funeral ceremony day, becomes impure and unfit to do any action, and, in the end, he goes to the Nakha Kuṇḍa where he receives blows of clubs and eats nails for one hundred Deva years. If anybody worships, out of carelessness, the earthen Śiva-linga with any hairs on it, he goes to the hell Keśa Kuṇḍa where he remains for as many years as there are particles in that hair; then he gets to the *yoni* (womb) a Yāvanānī (a Mlechcha woman) out of Hara's wrath. After one hundred years he becomes freed from that and then he becomes a Rākṣasa; there is no doubt about this. He who does not offer Piṇḍas to the Viṣṇupāda in honor of his Pitṛs at Gayā goes to the hell Asthikuṇḍa where he remains for as many years as there are dirts on his body. Then he becomes a man; but for seven births he becomes lame and poor. Then he gets purified. The stupid man who commits outrage and violence on his pregnant wife, resides for one hundred years in the hot Tāmra Kuṇḍa (where copper is in a molten condition). He who takes the

food of a childless widow and the same of any woman that has just bathed after menstruation goes for one hundred years to the hot Lauha Kuṇḍa (where iron is in a molten condition). For seven births he becomes then a crow and for seven births he becomes born of a washerwoman, full of sores and boils, and poor. Then he gets purified.

51-61. If one touches the things of the Devas after touching skins or impure hides, one remains in the Charma Kuṇḍa for full one hundred years. If any Brāhmaṇa eats a Śūdra's food, requested by him, he lives for one hundred years in the hot Surā Kuṇḍa. Then for seven births he performs the funeral rites for a Śūdra; at last he becomes pure. If any foul-mouthed person uses always harsh and filthy language to his master, he will have to go to Tīksna Kantaka Kuṇḍa where he eats thorns. Besides, the Yama's servants give severe beatings to him with their clubs. For seven births he will have to become horses, then he gets purified. If any man ministers poison to another and so takes away his life, he will have to remain for endless years in Visakuṇḍa, where he will have to eat poison. Then he will have to pass for one hundred years as a murderer Bhilla, full of sores and boils, and for seven births he will have to be a leper when at last he gets purified. Being born in this holy land Bhāratavarṣa, if any man strikes a cow with a rod or any driver does so whether by himself or by his servant, he will have to dwell certainly in the hot Lauha Kuṇḍa for four *yugas*. He will have to pass as many years as a cow as there are hairs on that cow, when ultimately he gets purified. If anybody strikes any other body with a red-hot iron dart (*kunta* weapon), he will have to dwell in the Kunta Kuṇḍa for ayuta years. Then he will have to remain for one birth in a good womb, with a diseased constitution, when ultimately he will be purified.

62-85. If any Brāhmaṇa villain eats, out of greed, any flesh (not sacrificed before the goddess) or anything not offered to Hari, he will have to remain in the Krimi Kuṇḍa where he eats those things for as many years as there are hairs on his body. Then he will have to pass for three births as Mlecchas when ultimately he becomes born in a Brāhmaṇa family. If any Brāhmaṇa performs the *śrāddha* of a Śūdra, eats the food pertaining to a *śrāddha* of a

Śūdra or burns the dead body of a Śūdra, he will have to dwell certainly in Pūya Kuṇḍa, where, being beaten by the rod of Yama, he eats pus, etc., for as many years as there are hairs on his body. Then he becomes reborn in this Bhārata as one greatly diseased, poor, deaf and dumb and ultimately he will have to roam for seven births as a Śūdra. He who kills a black serpent on whose hood there is the lotus mark, lives in Sarpa Kuṇḍa for as many years as there are hairs on his body and he is bitten by serpents there, beaten by the servants of Yama and eats the excrescences of snakes and finally becomes born as a serpent. Then he becomes a man, shortlived and having the cuticaneous disease and ringworm. And his death also comes out of snake-bite. He who kills mosquitoes and other small fanged-animals, that earn their substance rightly and pass so their lives, goes to Damśamaśa Kuṇḍa where he is eaten by mosquitoes and other fanged-creatures and lives there without food and crying, weeping, for as many years as the numbers of lives destroyed. Besides the Yama's servants tie his hands and feet and beat him. Then he becomes born as flies, when ultimately he becomes purified. He who beats and chastises any man not fit to be chastised and beaten and as well as a Brāhmaṇa, goes to Vajra Damstra Kuṇḍa, full of worms, and lives there day and night for as many years as there are the number of hairs on the chastised person. When he is bitten by the worms and beaten by Yama's servants, he cries sometimes, weeps sometimes, and becomes very miserable. Next he is reborn as a crow for seven births when ultimately he gets purified. If any foolish king punishes and gives trouble to his subjects out of greed of money, he goes to Vrischika Kuṇḍa where he lives for as many years as there are hairs on the bodies of his subjects. There is no doubt about this. Finally he becomes born in this Bhārata as a scorpion; then a man diseased and defective in limbs, when ultimately he becomes freed of his sins. If any Brāhmaṇa carries or raises weapons, washes the clothes of others who do not perform Sandhyās and abandons his devotion to Hari, he lives in Sarādi Kuṇḍa for as many years as there are hairs on his body; he is, then, pierced by arrows. Finally he becomes purified. If any king maddened by his own folly and fault, shuts his subjects in a dark cell and kills them, then he will have to go to a dreadful dark hell filled with worms having fanged teeth and covered with

dirt. This hell is named Gola Kuṇḍa. He lives there bitten by insects for as many years as there are hairs on the bodies of his subjects. Finally he becomes a slave of those subjects, when he gets purified.

86-103. If anybody kills the sharks and crocodiles, etc., that rise out of the water spontaneously, he will have to remain, then, in Nakra Kuṇḍa for as many years as there are thorns or edged points on those animals. Then he will have to be born as crocodiles, etc., for some time, when he will be purified. If any man, overpowered with lust, sees another's wife's uncovered breast, loins, and face, he will have to remain in Kāka Kuṇḍa for as many years as there are hairs in his own body. Here the crows take out his eyes. Finally for three births he gets himself burned by fire when he becomes pure. He who steals in India the gold of the Devas and the Brāhmaṇas, dwells certainly in Manthāna Kuṇḍa for as many years as there are hairs on his body. My servants give him good beatings, and cudgellings; his eyes are covered by Manthāna Danda insects (or animals) and he eats their dirty faeces. Then he is reborn as a man but for three births he becomes blind and for seven births he becomes very poor, cruel, and a sinful goldsmith and then he is born a Suvarṇavanik. O fair one! He who steals in India copper or iron, silver or gold, dwells in Vīja Kuṇḍa for as many years as there are hairs on his body. There the Vījas (a kind of insect) cover his eyes and he eats the excrescences of those insects. My messengers torment him. Finally he gets purified. If anybody steals in India any Devatā or the articles of a Devatā, he dwells in Vajra Kuṇḍa for as many years as there are hairs on his body. There his body gets burnt up. My messengers torment him and he a cries and weeps and remains without any food. Then he gets purified. If anybody steals the metal gold or silver, cows, or garments of any Deva or a Brāhmaṇa, certainly he dwells in hot Pāsāna Kuṇḍa for as many years as there are hairs on his body. Next for three births he becomes a tortoise and all sorts of white birds. Finally for three births he becomes a leper and for one birth be becomes a man with white marks on his body. Next for seven births he becomes diseased with a severe colic pain and bad blood and lives short. Then he gets purified. If anybody steals brass or Kāmsya properties of any Deva or a Brāhmaṇa, he

will have to remain in the sharp Pāsāna Kuṇḍa for as many years as there are hairs on his body. Next he becomes born in Bhārata for seven births as horses; and ultimately his both the testicles get enlarged and he gets diseases in his legs when he gets purified. If anybody verily eats the food of an adulterate woman or lives on her alms, he will have to go to the Lālā Kuṇḍa for as many years as there are hairs on his body. My messengers torment him there and he eats the saliva and thus lives miserably. Then he gets eye diseases and colic; when ultimately he gets purified.

104-126. If any Brāhmaṇa lives on writing only or on the service of Mlecchas, he lives in Masi Kuṇḍa very painfully, eating ink, tormented by My messengers for as many years as there are hairs on his body. Then he becomes a black animal for three births and for another three births he becomes a black goat. Then he becomes a Tāl tree when he gets purified. If anybody steals a Deva's or a Brāhmaṇa's grains, or any other good materials, betel, *āsan* (seat) or bedding, he lives in Chūrna Kuṇḍa for one hundred years, tormented by my *dūtas* (messengers). Next for three births he gets himself born as a goat, cock, and monkey. Finally he becomes born as a man with the heart disease, without any issue, poor, and short lived. When, at last, he gets purified. If anybody steals any Brāhmaṇa's property and thereby does *chakra-pūjā* (the famous *chakra* circle worship in *Tantra*), or prepares a potter's wheel or any other wheels, he will have to go to Chakra Kuṇḍa and remain there for one hundred years, tormented by my messengers. Then he will be born for three births as an oilman, suffering from very severe diseases when he will ultimately be poor, without any issue and diseased. Finally he gets purified. If anybody casts a sinful eye on any Brāhmaṇa or on cows, he will have to remain in Vakra Kuṇḍa for one hundred Yugas. Next for three births he becomes a cat, for three births he becomes a vulture; for three births he becomes a boar; for three births he becomes a peacock; for seven births he becomes a man deformed and defective in limbs, his wife being dead, without any issue. Finally he becomes purified. If any person born in a Brāhmaṇa family eats the flesh of a tortoise that is prohibited, he lives in Kūrma Kuṇḍa, for one hundred years, eaten by tortoises. Then he becomes for three births a tortoise; for

three births, a boar; for three births a cat; for three births, a peacock; until at last he gets purified. If anybody steals clarified butter or oil of any Devas or a Brāhmaṇa he will have to go to Jvālā Kuṇḍa or Bhasma Kuṇḍa. That sinner remains in oil for one hundred years and gets soaked through and through. Then for seven births he becomes a fish and a mouse when he gets purified. If anybody, born here in this holy land Bhārata steals sweet scented oil of a Deva or of a Brāhmaṇa, the powdered myrobalan or any other scent, he goes to Dagdha Kuṇḍa where he lives, burnt day and night for as many years as there are hairs on his body. For seven births he becomes born emitting a nasty smell, for three births he becomes musk (*mriga-nābhi*); for seven births, as a Manthāna insect. Then he becomes born as a man. If, out of envy, a powerful man appropriates to his purpose another's ancestral property by cheating, by using force, he goes to the hot Sūchī Kuṇḍa, being tormented there like a *jīva* dropped in the midst of a very hot oil tank, full of boiling oil. His body is, then, being burnt up severely as the result of his own *karma*; the wonder being that his body never gets completely destroyed nor reduced to ashes. For seven *manvantaras* he lives there without any food. My messengers give him good beatings and cudgellings and chastise him; he cries aloud. Next he gets himself born as worms of faeces for sixty thousand years. When he becomes born as a pauper without owning any land. Thus that villain, getting a fresh lease of human birth, begins again to do fresh good acts."

Here ends the Thirty-third Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the description of the destinies of different sinners in different hells in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXIV—Description of the various Hells

1-28. Dharma Rāja Yama said: "O fair one! If, in this Bhārata, any murderer, merciless and fierce, kills any man out of greed for money, he goes and miserably dwells in the Asipattra hell for fourteen Indra's lifetimes. And if that murderer kills a Brāhmaṇa, he lives in that hell for one hundred *manvantaras*. While in hell, his body becomes fiercely cut and wounded by

swords. There My messengers chastise him and beat him and he cries aloud and passes his time without any food. Then he becomes born for one hundred years as a *manthāna* insect, for hundred births as a boar, for seven births as a cock; for seven births as a fox, for seven births as a tiger; for three births, as a wolf; for seven births, as a frog; then as a buffalo when he becomes freed of his sins of murders. If anybody sets fire to a city or a village, he will have to live in Ksuradhāra Kuṇḍa for three *yugas* with his body severed. Then he becomes a Preta (disembodied spirit) and travels over the whole earth, being burnt up with fire. For seven births he eats unclean and unholy food and spends his time as a pigeon. Then for seven births he becomes diseased with a severe colic pain, for seven births as a leper; when ultimately he gets a pure human body. If anybody whispers in one's ear another's calumny and thus glorifies himself and abuses and vilifies the Devas and Brāhmaṇas, he goes and remains in Sūchī Kuṇḍa for three *yugas*, and he is pierced there by needles. Then he becomes a scorpion for seven births, a serpent for seven births, and an insect (Bhasma Kīta) for seven births; then he gets a diseased human body when, at last, he becomes purified. If anybody breaks into another's house and steals away all the household articles, cows, goats or buffaloes, he goes to Gokā Mukha Kuṇḍa where faeces are like cow's hoofs, there, beaten by My servants, for three *yugas*. (Gokā is Goksura, hoof of a cow). Then, for seven births, he becomes a diseased cow; for three births, a sheep; for three births, a goat; and finally he becomes a man. But in this man-birth he is born first as diseased, poor, deprived of wife and friends, and a repenting person; when ultimately he is freed of his sin. If anybody steals any ordinary thing, he goes to Nakra Mukha Kuṇḍa and lives there for three years, greatly tormented by My messengers. Next for seven births, he becomes a diseased ox. Then he attains a very diseased man-birth, and ultimately he is freed of his sins. Such are the horrible results. If anybody kills a cow, elephant, horse, or cuts a tree, he goes to Gaja Damśa Kuṇḍa for three *yugas*. There he is punished by My messengers freely by the teeth of elephants. Then he attains three elephant births, three horse-births; then he becomes born as a cow and ultimately he is born a Mlechcha when he becomes pure. If anybody obstructs any thirsty cow from drinking water, he goes to Krimi Kuṇḍa and

Gomukha Kuṇḍa filled with hot water and lives there for one *manvantara*. Next when he attains a human birth he owns not any cattle nor any wealth; rather he is born as a man, very much diseased, in low castes, for seven births when he becomes freed. If anybody, being born in Bhārata, kills cows, Brāhmaṇas, women, beggars, causes abortions or goes to those not fit to be gone into, he lives in the Kumbhīpāka hell for fourteen Indra's lifetimes. There be is pulverised always by My messengers. He is made to fall sometimes in fire, sometimes over thorns, sometimes in hot oil, sometimes in hot water, sometimes in molten iron or copper. That great sinner gets thousand vulture births, hundred boar births, seven crow births and seven serpent births. He then becomes worms of faeces for sixty thousand years. Thus travelling frequently in ox births he at last becomes born as a very poor leper."

29-31. Sāvitrī said: "O Bhagavān! What is, according to the *śāstras, brahma-hatyā* (murdering a Brāhmaṇa) and *gohatyā* (killing a cow)? Who are called *agamyās* (women unfit to be approached)? Who are designated as void of *sandhyā* (daily worship of the twice born castes)? Who can be called uninitiated? Who are said to take *pratigrahas* (gifts) in a *tīrtha?* What are the characteristics of a real *grāmayājī* (village priests), *devala* (Brāhmaṇa of an inferior order who subsists upon the offerings made to the images which he attends), the cook of a Śūdra, of one who is infatuated (*pramatta*) and the *vrisalīpati* (one who has married an unmarried girl twelve years old in whom menstruation has commenced; a barren woman). Kindly describe all these to me."

32-91. Dharmarājan said: "O fair Sāvitrī! If anybody makes a distinction between Kṛṣṇa and His image or between any Deva and his image, between Śiva and His *lingam*, between the Sun and the stone Sūrya Kānta (a precious stone of a bright and glittering color) between Gaṇeśa and Durgā, he is said to be guilty of the sin *brahma-hatyā*. If anybody makes any difference (superiority or inferiority) between his own *iṣṭā-deva* (his worshipable Deity), his Spiritual Teacher, his natural father and mother, is certainly involved in the sin of *brahma-hatyā*. He who shows any difference

(superiority or inferiority) between the devotees of Viṣṇu and those of other Devas, is said to commit *brahma-hatyā*. He who makes any difference in matters of respect between the waters of the feet of any Brāhmaṇa and those of *śālagrāma* stone, is said to commit *brahma-hatyā*. The difference between the offerings to Hari and Hara leads to *brahma-hatyā*. He who shows any difference between Kṛṣṇa, Who is verily the God of gods, the cause of all causes, the origin of all, Who is worshipped by all the Devas, Who is the Self of all, Who is attributeless and without a second yet Who by His magic powers assumes many forms and who is Iśāna, is said to commit, indeed, the *brahma-hatyā*. If any Vaiṣṇava (a devotee of Viṣṇu) abuses and envies a *śakta* (a devotee of Śakti), he commits *brahma-hatyā*. He who does not worship, according to the *Vedas*, the Pitṛs and the Devas or prohibits others in doing so, commits *brahma-hatyā*. He who abuses Hṛṣikeśa, Who is the highest of the holy things, Who is knowledge and bliss and Who is eternal, Who is the only God to be served by the Devas and Vaiṣṇavas, and those Who are worshippers of His *mantra*, and those who do not worship themselves are said to commit *brahma-hatyā*. He who abuses and vilifies Mūla-Prakṛti Mahā-Devī, Who is of the nature of causal Brahman (*kārana-brahma*), Who is all power and the Mother of all, Who is worshipped by all and who is of the nature of all the Devas and the cause of all causes, Who is *ādyā-Śakti* Bhagavatī, is said to commit *brahma-hatyā*. He who does not observe the Holy Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāstami, Śrī Rāma Navamī, Śivarātri, the Ekādaśī happening on Sunday, and five other holy *pārvanas* (festivals), commits *Brahmahatyā*; is considered more sinful than a *caṇḍāla*. He who in this land of Bhārata, digs earth on the day of *ambuvāchī* or urinates, etc. in the waters of the tanks, is involved in the sin of *brahma-hatyā*. He who does not support his spiritual teacher, mother, father, chaste wife, son and daughter, though they are faultless, commits *brahma-hatyā*. He whose marriage does not take place during his whole lifetime, who does not see the face of his son, who does not cherish devotion to Hari, who eats things unoffered to Śrī Hari, who never worshipped throughout his life Viṣṇu or an earthen symbol of Śiva, verily commits *brahma-hatyā*.

O fair One! Now I will recite the characteristics, according to the *śāstras*, of *gohattyā* (killing a cow). Listen. If anybody does not prohibit one, seeing one to beat a cow, or if he goes between a cow and a Brāhmaṇa, he is involved in the sin of *gohattyā*. If any illiterate Brāhmaṇa, carrying an ox, daily beats with a stick the cows, certainly he commits *gohattyā*. If anybody gives the remains of another's meal to a cow to eat, or feeds a Brāhmaṇa who carries, rather moves or drives, cows and oxen; or eats himself the food of such a Brāhmaṇa driver, he commits *gohattyā*. Those who do sacrifices of the husband of a barren woman (*vrisalī*) or eat his food, commit sin equal to one hundred *gohattyās*; there is no doubt about this. Those who touch fire with their feet, beat the cows or enter the temple bathing but not washing their feet, commit *gohattyā*. Those who eat without washing their feet or those who sleep with their feet wetted with water and those who eat just after the Sun has risen, commit *Gohattyā*. Those who eat the food of women without husbands or sons or the food of pimps and pampers or those who do not perform their *sandhyās* thrice, commit *gohattyā*. If any woman makes any difference between her husband the Devatā, or chastises and uses harsh words to her husband, she commits *gohattyā*. If anybody destroys cow's pasture land, tanks, or land for forts and cultivates there grains, he commits *gohattyā*. He who does not do *prāyaścitta* (expiation, atonement) for the expiation of the sin of *gohattyā* done by his son (for fear of his son's life), commits the sin himself. If any trouble arises in the state or from the Devas, and if any master does not protect then his own cows, rather torments them, he is said to commit *gohattyā*.

If any *jīva* oversteps the image of a Deva, fire, water, offerings to a god, flowers, or food, he commits the great sin *brahma-hatyā*. When a guest comes, if the master of the house always says, "there is nothing, nothing with me; no, no," and if he be a liar, cheat and an abuser of the Devas, he commits the above sin. O fair one! Whoever seeing his spiritual teacher, and a Brāhmaṇa, does not bow down and make respectful obeisance to them, commits *gohattyā*. If any Brāhmaṇa, out of sheer anger, does not utter blessings to a man who bows down or does not impart knowledge to a student, he commits *gohattyā*.

O fair one! Thus I have described to you the characteristics, approved by *śāstras*, of cow-killing (*gohattyā*) and murdering a Brāhmaṇa (*brahma-hatyā*). Now hear which women are *agamyās,* not fit to be approached and those which are fit to be approached (*gamyās*). One's own wife is fit to be approached (*gamyās*) and all other women are *agamyās*, so the Paṇḍitas, versed in the *Vedas*, declare. This is a general remark; now hear everything in particular. O chaste one! The Brāhmaṇa wives of Śūdras or the Śūdra wives of Brāhmaṇas are *atyāgamyās* (very unfit to be approached) and blameable both in the *vedas* and in the society. A Śūdra going to a Brāhmaṇī woman commits one hundred *brahma-hatyās;* so a Brāhmaṇa woman going to a Śūdra goes to the Kumbhīpāka hell. As a Śūdra should avoid a Brahmāni, so a Brāhmaṇa should avoid a Śūdra woman. A Brāhmaṇa going to a Śūdra woman is recognized a *bṛsalipati* (one who has married an unmarried girl twelve years old in whom menstruation has commenced). So much so that that Brāhmaṇa is considered an outcast and the vilest of the *caṇḍālas*. The offerings of *piṇḍas* by him are considered as faeces and water offered by him is considered as urine. Nowhere, whether in the Devaloka or in the Pitriloka, his offered Piṇḍas and water are accepted. Whatever religious merits he has acquired by worshipping the Devas and practicing austerities for *koti* births, he loses all at once by the greed of enjoying the Śūdra woman. There is no doubt about this. A Brāhmaṇa, if he drinks wine, is considered as the husband of a *vṛsalī*, eating faeces. And if he be a Vaiṣṇava, a devotee of Viṣṇu, his body must be branded with the marks of a *taptamudrā* (hot seal); and if he be a *śaiva*, his body is to be branded with the *tapta-śūla* (hot trident). The wife of a spiritual teacher, the wife of a king, stepmother, daughter, son's wife, mother-in-law, sister of the same father and mother, the wife of one's brother (of the same father and mother), the wife of a maternal uncle, the father's mother, mother's mother, the mother's sister, sisters, the brother's daughter, the female disciple, the disciple's wife, the wife of the sister's son, the wife of the brother's son, these all are mentioned by Brahmā as *atyāgamyās* (very unfit to be approached). The people are hereby warned. If anybody, overpowered by passion, goes to these *atyāgamyā* women, he becomes the vilest of men. The *Vedas* consider him as if going to his mother and he commits one hundred

brahma-hatyā sins. These have no right to do any actions. They are not to be touched by any. They are blamed in the *Vedas*, in the society everywhere. Ultimately they go to the dreadful Kumbhīpāka hells.

O fair one! He who performs *sandhyās* wrongly or reads it wrongly or does not perform at all the three *sandhyās* daily, is called as void of *sandhyā*. He is said to remain uninitiated who does not, out of sheer vanity, receive any mantra, whether he be a Vaiṣṇava, Śaivite, or a Sun worshipper or the Gaṇeśa worshipper.

Where there is the running stream of the Ganges, lands on either side, four hands in width, are said to be the womb of the Ganges (Gaṅgā Garbha) Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa incessantly dwells there. This is called the Nārāyaṇa-kṣetra). One goes to Viṣṇupada who dies in such a place. Vārānasī (Benares), Vadarī, the confluence of the Ganges with the ocean (Gaṅga-Sāgara), Puṣkara, Hari Hara Kṣetra (in Behar near Chāprā), Prabhāsa, Kāmarūpa, Hardwar, Kedāra, Mātripura, the banks of the river Sarasvatī, the holy land Bindrāban, Godāvarī, Kauśikī, Trivenī (Allahabad), and the Himālayas are all famous places of pilgrimages. Those who willingly accept gifts in these sacred places are said to be *tīrthapratigrāhīs* (the acceptors of the gifts in the *tīrtha*). These *tīrthaprathigrāhīs* go in the end to Kumbhīpāka hell. The Brāhmaṇa who acts as priest to the Śūdras is called Śūdrayājī; the village priests are called Grāmayājīs. Those who subsist on the offerings made to the gods are called Devalas. The cooks of the Śūdras are called Sūpakāras. Those who are void of *sandhyā-vandanams* are called *pramattas* (mad).

O Bhadre! These are the marks of the *vṛsalīpatis* that I have (now) enumerated. These are the Great Sinners (*mahā-pātakas*). They go ultimately to the Kumbhīpāka hell. O fair one! I now state by and by the other *kuṇḍas* (hells) when other people go. Listen."

Here ends the Thirty fourth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the description of the various hells in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXV—Description of the Various Hells

1-44. Dharmarājan said: "O chaste one! Without serving the Gods, the *karmik* ties can never be severed. Pure acts are the seeds of purities and the impure acts lead to impure seeds. If any Brāhmaṇa goes to any unchaste woman and eats her food, he will have to go ultimately to the Kālasūtra hell. There he lives for one hundred years when ultimately he gets a human birth when he passes his times as a diseased man and ultimately he gets purified. Those women who are addicted to their (one) husbands only are called *pativratās*. Those addicted to two persons are named *kulatās;* to three, are called *dharsinīs;* to four, called *pumśchalīs*; to five, six persons, called *veśyās;* to seven, eight, nine persons are called *pungīs;* and to more than these, are called *mahāveśyās*. The *mahāveśyās* are unfit to be touched by all the classes. If any Brāhmaṇa goes to *kulatā, dharsinī, pumśchalī, pungī, veśyā* or *mahāveśyā*, he will have to go to the Matsyoda Kuṇḍa. Those who go to *kulatās* remain there for one hundred years; those who go to *dharsinīs*, remain for four hundred years, those who go to *pumśchalīs* for six hundred years; those who go to *veśyās*, for eight hundred years; those who go to *pungīs*, remain for one thousand years and those who go to *mahāveśyās* remain in the Matsyoda Kuṇḍa for ten thousand years. My messengers chastise and beat and torment them very severely. And when their terms expire, the *kulatā*-goers become *tittiris* (a bird), the *dharsinī*-goers become crows, the *pumśchalī*-mongers become cuckoos, the *veśyā* hunters become wolves; the *pungī*-goers become for seven births boars. If any ignorant person eats food during the lunar and solar eclipses, he goes to Aruntuda Kuṇḍa for as many years as there are particles in that food. He then becomes born diseased with *gulma* (chronic enlargement of spleen) having no ears nor teeth, and after passing his time so, he becomes freed of his previous sin. If anybody makes a promise to give his daughter to one but he gives actually to a different person, he goes to Pāmśu Kuṇḍa where he eats ashes for one hundred years. Again if anybody sells his daughter, he sleeps on a bed of arrows in Pamśuvesta Kuṇḍa for one hundred years, chastised and beaten by My messengers. If any Brāhmaṇa does not worship with devotion the Śiva-*lingam*, he goes to the dreadful Śūlaprota

Kuṇḍa for that heinous sin. He remains there for one hundred years; then he becomes a quadruped animal for seven births and again he becomes born a Devala Brāhmaṇa for seven births when he becomes freed. If any Brāhmaṇa defeats another Brāhmaṇa in a bad useless argument and trifles him and makes him tremble, he goes to the Prakampana Kuṇḍa for as many years as there are hairs on his body. If any woman, being very furious with anger, chastises and uses harsh words to her husband, she goes to Ulkāmukha Kuṇḍa for as many years as there are hairs on his body. My servants put fiery meteors or torches in her mouth and beat on her head. At the end of the term, she becomes a human being but she has to bear the torments of widowhood for seven births. Then she is again born as diseased; when at last she gets herself freed. The Brāhmaṇa woman, enjoyed by a Śūdra, goes to the terrible dark Andhakūpa hell, where she remains, day and night, immersed in the impure water and eats that for fourteen Indra's lifetimes. Her pains are unbounded and My messengers beat her severely and incessantly. At the expiry of the term in that hell, she becomes a female crow for thousand births, a female boar for one hundred births, a female fox for one hundred births, a hen for one hundred years, a female pigeon for seven births, and a female monkey for seven births. Then she becomes a Chāndālī in this Bhārata, enjoyed by all. Then she becomes an unchaste woman with the pthisis disease, a washerwoman, and then an oilwoman with leprosy when she becomes freed.

O fair one! The *veśyās* live in the Vedhana and Jalarandhra hells; the *pungīs* live in the Dandatādana hell; the *kulatās* live in the Dehachūrna hells; the *svairinīs* live in the Dalana hells; the *dharsinīs* live in Śosana hells. Their pains know no bounds at all those places. My messengers always beat and chastise them and they eat always the urine and faeces for one *manvantara*. Then, at the expiry of their hell period, they become worms of faeces for one *lakh* years when they become freed. If a Brāhmaṇa goes to another Brāhmaṇa's wife, if a Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra do so, they go to the Kasāya hell. There they drink the hot Kasāya water for twelve years when they become purified. The lotus-born Brahmā has said that the wives of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, etc., live in hells like Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, etc., and

they then get freed. If a Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya goes to a Brāhmaṇa's wife, he is involved in the sin of his going to his mother and goes and lives in the Śūrpa hell. There the worms of the size of a *śūrpa* bite that Kṣatriya, that Vaiśya and that Brāhmaṇa's wife. My messengers chastise them and they have to eat hot urine. Thus they suffer pains for fourteen Indra's lifetimes. When they become boars for seven births and goats for seven births, when at last they are freed. Now if anybody makes a false promise or swears falsely, taking the Tūlasī leaf in his hands, if anybody makes a false promise, taking the Ganges water, *śālagrāma* stone, or any other images of God in his hand; if anybody swears falsely, placing his right palm on the palm of another; if anybody swears falsely, being in a temple or touching a Brāhmaṇa or a cow; if anybody acts against his friends or others, if he be treacherous or if he gives a false evidence; then all these persons go to Jvālā Mukha hell, and remain there for fourteen Indra's lifetimes, chastised and beaten by My messengers and feeling pain as if one's body is being burnt by red hot coal. One who gives a false evidence, with the Tūlasī (holy basil) in his hand becomes a Caṇḍāla for seven births; one who makes a false promise with the Ganges water in his hand, becomes a Mlechcha for five births; one who swears falsely while touching the *śālagrāma* stone, becomes a worm of the faeces for seven births; one who swears falsely, touching the image of the God, becomes a worm in a Brāhmaṇa's house for seven births; one who gives a false evidence touching with the right hand, becomes a serpent for seven births; then he becomes born as a Brāhmaṇa, void of the knowledge of the *Vedas*, when he becomes freed. One who speaks falsely while in a temple, is born as a Devala for seven births.

45-59. If one swears falsely, touching a Brāhmaṇa, one becomes a tiger. Then he becomes dumb for three births, then for three births he becomes deaf, without wife, without friends, and his family becomes extinct. Then he becomes pure. Those that rebel against their friends, become mongoose; the treacherous persons become rhinoceroses; the hypocrite and treacherous persons become tigers, and those who give false evidences become frogs. So much so, that their seven generations above and seven generations below go to hell. If any Brāhmaṇa does not perform his daily

duties (*nitya-karma*), he is reckoned as *jada* (a dumb person). He has no faith in the *Vedas*. Rather he laughs at the Vedic customs. He does not observe vows and fastings; he blames others who give good advices. Such persons live in Dhūmrāndhakāra hell where they eat dark smoke only. Then he roams about as an aquatic animal for one hundred births successively. Then he becomes born as various fishes when he is freed. If anybody jests at the wealth of a Deva or a Brāhmaṇa, then he with his ten generations above and below becomes fallen and he himself goes to the Dhūmrāndhakāra hell, terribly dark and filled with smoke. There his pains know no bounds and he lives there for four hundred years, eating smoke only. Then he becomes a mouse for seven births, and he becomes various birds and worms, various trees and various animals when ultimately he gets a human birth. If a Brāhmaṇa earns his livelihood by being an astrologer or if he be a physician and lives thereby or if he sells lac, iron, or oil, etc., he goes to the Nāgavstana Kuṇḍa hell where he lives for as many years as there are hairs on his body, tied up by snakes. Then he becomes born as various birds; ultimately he gets a human birth and becomes an astrologer for seven births and a physician for seven births. Then for sometime he becomes a cowherd (milkman), for sometimes a blacksmith; or sometimes a painter, when he becomes freed of his sin.

O chaste one! Thus I have described to you all the famous Kuṇḍas or hells. Besides there are innumerable small Kuṇḍas. The sinners go there and suffer the fruits of their own *karmas* and travel through various wombs. O fair one! What more do you now want to hear? Say."

Here ends the Thirty-Fifth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the description of the various hells for the various sinners in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXVI—Destruction of the Fear of Yama

1-7. Sāvitrī said: "O Dharmarājan! O highly fortunate One! O Thou! Expert in the *Vedas* and the *Aṅgas* thereof! Now kindly describe that which is the

essence of the various *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*, which is the quintessence, which is dear to all, approved of by all, which is the seed by which *karmik* ties are cut asunder, which is high, noble and happy in this life. Kindly describe the above by which man can acquire all his desires, and what is the only source of all the good and auspicious things. All by knowing which man has not to face any dangers or troubles, nor has he to go to the dreadful hells that thou hast severally just now described, and that by which men can be freed of those various wombs. Kindly now describe all these.

O Bhagavan! What is the size of the several *kuṇḍas* or hells that Thou hast just now enumerated? How do the sinners dwell there? When a man departs, his body is reduced to ashes. Then of what sort is that other body by which the sinners enjoy the effects of their *karmas,* and why do not those bodies get destroyed when they suffer so much pains for so long a time? What sort of body is that? Kindly describe all these to me."

8-33. Nārāyaṇa spoke: "Hearing the questions put forward by Sāvitrī, Dharmarāja remembered Śrī Hari and began to speak on subject that sever the bonds of *karma:* 'O child! O one of good vows! In the four *Vedas*, in all the *Skandhas* on *Dharma*, *Smṛtis* and in all the *Samhitās*, all the *Itihāsas,* all the *Purāṇas*, in the *Nārada-Pañcharātram*, in the other *dharma-śāstras* and *Vedāṅgas*, it is definitely stated that the worship of the Pañcha Devatās (the five Gods) Śiva, Śakti, Viṣṇu, Gaṇeśa, and Sūrya is the best, the highest, the destroyer of the old age, disease, death, evils and sorrows, the most auspicious and leading to the highest bliss. In fact, the worship of these Pañcha Devatās is the source of acquiring all the *siddhis* (spiritual success) and saves one from going to the hells. From their worship springs the tree of *bhakti,* and then and then only, the root of the tree of all *karmik* bonds is severed forever and ever. This is the step to *mukti* (final liberation) and is the indestructible state. By this one can get *sālokya, sārṣṭi, sārūpya* and *sāmīpya,* the different states of beatitudes in which the soul (1) resides in the same world with the Deity, (2) possesses the same station, condition, or rank, or equality with the Supreme Being in power and all the Divine

attributes (the highest of the four grades of *mukti*), (3) possesses the sameness of form or gets assimilated to the Deity or (4) gets intimately united, identified or absorbed into the Deity.

O auspicious one! The worshipper of these five Devatās has never to see any of the hells, watched by My messengers. Those who are devoid of the devotion to the Devī see My abode; but those who go to the *tīrthas* of Hari, who hold *harivāsaras* (festivities on the days of Hari) who bow down at the feet of Hari and worship Hari, never come to My abode named Samyamana. Those Brāhmaṇas that are purified by their performing the three *sandhyās* and by the following the pure *āchāras* (customs and observances), those that find no pleasure until they worship the Devī, those that are attached to their own *dharmas* and *āchāras*, never come to My abode.

My terrible messengers, seeing the devotees of Śiva, run away out of terror, as snakes run away terrified by Garuḍa. I also order My messengers with nooses in their hands never to go to them. My messengers go mostly to other persons than the servants of Hari. No sooner do My messengers see the worshippers of the Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, than they run away as snakes get terrified at the sight of Garuḍa. Citragupta, too, one of the beings in Yama's world, recording the vices and virtues of mankind, strike off the names of the Devī worshippers, out of fear and prepare *madhuparka*, etc., for them (a mixture of honey; respectful offering made to a guest or to the bridegroom on his arrival at the door of the father of the bride). They rise higher than the Brahmālokas and go to the Devī's abode, i.e., to Maṇidvīpa. Those that are the worshippers of the Śakti-*mantra* and are highly fortunate, whose contact removes the sins of others, they deliver the thousand generations (from the downward course). As bundles and bundles of dry grasses become burnt to ashes no sooner they are thrown into fire, so the delusion at once becomes itself deluded at the sight of the forms of those devotees. At their sight, lust, anger, greed, disease, sorrow, old age, death, fear, *kāla* (time that takes away the life of persons), the good and bad *karmas,* pleasures and enjoyments drop off to a great distance.

O fair one! Now I have described to you the states of those persons that are not under the control of *kāla*, good and bad *karmas*, pleasures and enjoyments, etc., and those that do not suffer those pains. Now I am speaking of this visible body. Listen. Earth, water, fire, air, and ether are the five *mahā-bhūtas* (the great elements); these are the seeds of this visible body of the person and are the chief factors in the work of creation. The body that is made up of earth and other elements is transient and artificial, i.e., that body becomes burnt to ashes. Within this visible body, bound, there is a Puruṣa of the size of a thumb; that is called the *jīva-puruṣa;* the subtle *jīva* assumes those subtle bodies for enjoying the effects of *karmas*. In My world, that subtle body is not burnt by the burning fire. If that subtle body be immersed in water, if that be beaten incessantly or if it be struck by a weapon or pierced by a sharp thorn, that body is not destroyed. That body is not burnt nor broken by the burning hot and molten material, by the red hot iron, by hot stones, by embracing a hot image or by falling into a burning cauldron. That body has to suffer incessant pains.

O fair one! Thus I have dwelt on the subject of the several bodies and the causes thereof according to the *śāstras*. Now I will describe to you the characters of all the other *kuṇḍas*. Listen.'

Here ends the Thirty-sixth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the destruction of the fear of the Yama of those who are the worshippers of the Five Devatās, in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXVII—the Eighty-six Kuṇḍas

1-60. Dharmarāja said: "All the Kuṇḍas (hells) are circular in form like the full Moon. Of these, the Vahnikuṇḍa has the fire lit at its bottom, by the help of various kinds of stones. This *kuṇḍa* will not be destroyed until Mahāpralaya comes. Here the sinners are tormented severely. It looks like blazing coke. The flames are rising from it one hundred hands high. In circumference those flames are two miles. This is named Vahnikuṇḍa. It is full of sinners crying loudly. It is constantly watched by My messengers

who are chastising and punishing the sinners. Next comes the Tapta Kuṇḍa. It is filled with hot water and full of rapacious animals. The sinners there are severely beaten by My messengers and they are always crying out very loudly, which is being echoed and re-echoed all around terribly. It extends for one mile. This *kuṇḍa* is filled with hot salt water and the abode of many crows. Then there is the Bhayānaka Kuṇḍa. It extends for two miles and it is filled with sinners. They are being punished by My messengers and they are incessantly crying, "Save us, save us."

Next comes the Visthā Kuṇḍa. It is filled with faeces and excrements where the sinners are moving without any food and with their palate and throats dry. Its size is two miles and it is very bad and ugly with foetid and nasty smell. It is always filled with sinners, who are being chastised by My *dūtas* (messengers) and eat those faeces and excrements. The worms therein are constantly biting and stinging them and they are crying, "deliver us, deliver us." Then comes the hot Mūttra Kuṇḍa. It is filled with hot urine and the worms thereof. The great sinners always dwell here. It measures four miles; and it is quite dark. My Dūtas always beat them and their throats, lips, palates are all dry. Then comes the Ślesma Kuṇḍa. It is filled with phlegm and the insects thereof. The sinners dwell in phlegm and eat that phlegm. Then comes the Gara Kuṇḍa. It is filled with (factitious) poison. It measures one mile. The sinners eat this poison and dwell here. The worms thereof bite them. They tremble at the chastisement of My *dūtas* and cry aloud. My messengers look like serpents, with teeth like thunderbolts and they are very furious and fierce, with their throats dry and their words very harsh. Then comes Dūsikā Kuṇḍa. It is filled with the rheum and dirt of the eyes and it measures one mile. Innumerable worms are born therein. Numberless sinners live there, and as they move, the insects immediately bite and sting them. Next comes the Vasā Kuṇḍa. It is filled with the serum or marrow of the flesh and it measures one-half mile. The sinners dwell there, chastised and punished by My messengers. Then comes the Śukra Kuṇḍa. It measures two miles in diameter. The insects, born in the semen, bite the sinners, and they move on and on. Then comes the Rakta Kuṇḍa, with very offensive, foetid smell. It is deep like a well

and filled with blood. The sinners dwell here, drinking blood. The insects therein are always biting them. Then follows the Aśru Kuṇḍa. It measures in size one fourth the measure of the well (above-mentioned). It is always filled with hot tears of the eyes; and many sinners are seen there living weeping and crying and being bitten by the snakes. Then there is the Gātra Mala Kuṇḍa. The sinners are chastised and punished there by My messengers and being bitten by the insects thereof, they eat the dirts of the body and dwell there. Then comes the Karṇa Mala Kuṇḍa. The sinners eat the wax of the ear and fill the place. The insects always bite them and they are crying aloud. It measures one fourth the measure of a *vāpī*. Then comes the Majjā Kuṇḍa. It is filled with fat and marrow, emitting foetid offensive odor. It measures one fourth the measure of a *vāpī*. The great sinners always dwell there. Then comes the Māmsa Kuṇḍa. This is filled with the greasy flesh. It measures (one-fourth) that of a *vāpī*. Those who sell their daughters dwell here. My messengers always chastise and punish them and horrible insects bite and sting them and they cry, out of fear and agony, "Save us, save us," and eat at times that flesh. Then come in succession the four *kuṇḍas* Nakha, Loma and others. They also measure each one-fourth that of a *vāpī*. The sinners dwell there, always chastised by My messengers. Next comes the very hot Tāmra Kuṇḍa. Burning coke exists on the top of very hot copper. There are *lakhs* and *lakhs* of very hot copper figures in that *kuṇḍa*. The sinners, being compelled by My messengers, are made to embrace each of these hot copper figures and they cry loudly and live there. It measures four miles. Then come the burning Angāra Kuṇḍa and the hot Lauha Dhāra Kuṇḍa. Here the sinners are made to embrace the hot iron figures and, feeling themselves burnt, cry out of fear and agony. Whenever My messengers punish them, they immediately cry out, "Save us, save us." It measures eight miles; and it is pitch dark and very awful. This is named the hot Lauha Kuṇḍa. Then come the Charma Kuṇḍa and Surā Kuṇḍa. The sinners, beaten by My men, eat the skin and drink the hot urine and dwell there. Then comes the Śālmalī Kuṇḍa; it is overspread with thorns and thorny trees, causing intense pain. It measures two miles. Millions and millions of great sinners are made by My men to fall from the tops of those trees down below where their bodies get pierced by very

sharp thorns, six feet long; and thus they dwell there, beaten by My men. Out of thirst, their palates get dried up; and they cry out repeatedly, “Water, water.” Out of fear, they get very anxious and then their heads get broken by the clubs brought down on them by My men. So they move there like the beings burnt in very hot oil. Then comes the Visoda Kuṇḍa. It measures two miles in diameter and is filled with the poison of the serpent called Takṣakas. My men punish the sinners and they drink the poison thereof and dwell there. Then comes the hot Taila Kuṇḍa. There are no insects here. Only the great sinners dwell. All around burning coals are flaring and when My men beat the sinners, they run hither and thither. It is filled with horrible intense darkness and it is exceedingly painful. It looks dreadful and measures two miles. Then comes the Kunta Kuṇḍa. Sharp pointed iron weapons like tridents are placed in order all round. The sinners, pierced by those weapons, are seen encircling the Kuṇḍa. It measures one-half mile. Beaten by My men, their throats and lips get dried up. Then comes the Krimi Kuṇḍa. It is filled with terrible worms and insects, snake-like with sharp teeth, of the size of a *śanku* (*sāl* tree) deformed and hideous looking; and it is filled with pitch darkness, terrible to look at. Beaten by My men, the great sinners dwell there. Then comes the Pūya Kuṇḍa. It measures eight miles in diameter. The sinners dwell and eat the pus thereof and, are beaten by My men. Then comes the Sarpa Kuṇḍa. Millions and millions of snakes of the length of a *tāl* tree are existing there. These serpents encircle the sinners and as they bite them, My men also beat them at the same time. So there arises a general hue and cry, “Save us, save us; we are done for.” Then come in order the Damśa Kuṇḍa, Maśaka Kuṇḍa, and the Garala Kuṇḍa. These are filled with gad-flies, mosquitoes, and poison respectively. Each of them measures one mile. The sinners’ hands and feet are tied up. So when the gad-flies and mosquitoes fiercely sting them, and My men violently beat them simultaneously, they raise a loud uproar and are made to move on, in their tied states by My persons. Their bodies get thoroughly reddened and covered with blood by the stinging of the flies, etc. Then come the Vajra Kuṇḍa and the Vriśchika Kuṇḍa filled respectively with Vajra insects and the scorpions. Each of them measures one-half that of the *vāpī*. The sinners that dwell there are

incessantly bitten by insects, *vajras* and scorpions. Then come in order the Śara Kuṇḍa, Śūla Kuṇḍa and Khadga Kuṇḍas. They are filled respectively with arrows, spikes, and scimitars. Each of them measures one half that of the *vāpī*. The sinners are pierced by arrows, etc., and become covered over with blood and dwell there. Then comes the Gola Kuṇḍa. It is filled with boiling hot water and it is pitch dark. The sinners live there, bitten by the insects. This *kuṇḍa* measures half that of the *vāpī*. The insects bite them and My men beat them so their fear knows no bounds; every one of them is weeping and crying loudly. This Kuṇḍa is filled with hideously offensive smells. So the pains of the sinners are infinite. The Nakra Kuṇḍa comes next. It measures half the *vāpī*, is filled with millions and millions of crocodiles living in water. The horrible looking deformed sinners live there. The Kāka Kuṇḍa then follows. The sinners here are being bitten by hundreds of deformed crows eating faeces, urines and phlegm. Then come the Manthāna Kuṇḍa and Vīja Kuṇḍa. These are filled respectively with insects called *manthāna* and *vīja*. Each of them measures one hundred *dhanus* (one *dhanu* = four *hastas*). Those insects are stinging the sinners and they cry out very loudly. Then follows the Vajra Kuṇḍa. It measures one hundred *dhanus*. Many insects with their teeth as hard as thunderbolt live there and bite the sinners who cry out loudly. It is pitch dark. Then comes the hot Pāsāna Kuṇḍa. It measures twice that of the Vāpī. It is so built of hot stones as it resembles a burning mass of coal. The sinners become restless with the heat and turn round and round in the middle. Then comes the Pāsāna Kuṇḍa and the Lālā Kuṇḍa. The Pāsāna Kuṇḍa is made up of the sharp pointed stones, having sharp edges. Innumerable sinners dwell there. Many red beings live in the Lālā Kuṇḍa. Then comes the Mapī Kuṇḍa. Its size is one hundred *dhanus* and its depth is two miles. It is made up of hot stones, each measuring the Anjana mountain. The sinners, beaten and driven by My persons, move on and on in the middle. Then comes the Chūrna Kuṇḍa. It measures two miles (in circumference) and is filled with (seven) *chūrnas* (powders). The sinners, driven and beaten by My men, go on, restless hither and thither and eat the powders and get themselves burnt. Then comes the Chakra Kuṇḍa. Here a potter's wheel with sixteen

sharp-edged spokes is constantly whirling round and round; the sinners are being crushed by this wheel.

61-80. Then comes the Vakra Kuṇḍa. Its depth is eight miles. lt is fashioned very much curved; and with a sharp slope it has gone down. It is built on the plan of a mountain cave, filled with hot water and it is enveloped with deep dense darkness. The aquatic animals there are biting the sinners, who got very much restless and are crying out very loudly. Then comes the Kūrma Kuṇḍa. Here millions and millions of tortoises in the water awfully distorted, are biting the sinners. Then comes the Jvālā Kuṇḍa. It is built of fierce fiery flames. It measures two miles in circumference. The sinners here are always in great difficulty, with intense pain and crying out loudly. Next follows the Bhasma Kuṇḍa. It measures two miles. The sinners get themselves well burnt in hot ashes and live there, eating the ashes. It is filled with hot stones and hot irons. The sinners here are always being burnt in hot irons and hot stones and their throats and palates are being parched up. Then comes the Dagdha Kuṇḍa. It is deep and horrible. It measures two miles in circumference. My messengers threaten always the sinners there. Then comes the Sūchī Kuṇḍa. It is filled with salt water. Waves are always rising there. It is filled with various aquatic animals making all sorts of noises. It measures eight miles in circumference and it is deep and dark. The sinners here cannot see each other and are bitten by the animals. Pained very much, they cry out loudly. Then comes the Asipattra Kuṇḍa. On the top surface of the Kuṇḍa there is a very big *tāl* tree, very high. The edges of the leaves of this tree are sharp like the edge of a sword. One mile below this *tāl* tree is situated the *kuṇḍa*. The sharp-edged *tāl* leaves, then, fall on the bodies of the sinners from the height of a mile and they get cut and wounded; blood comes out of them and the sinners, in great pain, cry out "Save, save." It is very deep, very dark and filled with *rakta-kīta,* a kind of blood-like insect. This is the horrible Asipatra Kuṇḍa. Next comes the Ksura Dhāra Kuṇḍa, measuring one hundred *dhanus*. It is filled with keen-edged weapons, as sharp as nice razors. The blood of the sinners is flowing here profusely. Then comes the Sūchī Mukha Kuṇḍa, filled with sharp weapons of the form of long needles. It measures fifty

dhanus. The sinners get pierced by them and are constantly emitting blood. Their intense pain knows no bounds. Then comes the Gokāmukha Kuṇḍa; inhabited by a sort of insect called *gokā*. They look like mouths; hence they are named Gokāmukha. It is deep like a well and it measures twenty *dhanus*. The great sinners suffer an intense amount of pain there. They have got to keep their mouths always downwards, as the *gokā* insects always bite and sting them. Then comes the Nakra Kuṇḍa. It resembles like the mouth of a crocodile and measures sixteen *dhanus*. It is deep like a well and numbers of sinners dwell there. Then comes the Gaja Damśa Kuṇḍa. It measures one hundred *dhanus*. Next comes the Gomukha Kuṇḍa. It measures thirty *dhanus* and resembles the mouth of a cow. It gives incessant pains and troubles to the sinners.

81-101. Then comes the Kumbhīpāka Kuṇḍa. It is like a wheel resembling that of this Kālachakra, very horrible; and it is rotating incessantly. It looks like a water-jar, measuring eight miles, and it is quite dark. Its depth is one *lakh* Puruṣas of the height of 100,000 persons. There are many other *kuṇḍas* —Tapta Taila Kuṇḍa and Tapta Taila Tāmra Kuṇḍa, etc.—within it. This *kuṇḍa* is filled with almost unconscious great sinners and insects. They beat each other and cry out loudly. My messengers also threaten them with clubs and *musalas*. So at times they fall dizzy-headed, at times they get unconscious, and sometimes they get up and cry.

O fair one! The numbers of sinners here equal to four times that of all the other sinners in all the other *kuṇḍas*. They know no death, however much you beat them. Their lives persist. For the body is built up for sufferance, it is indestructible. This Kumbhīpāka Kuṇḍa is the chief of all the *kuṇḍas*. This *kuṇḍa* where the sinners are tied to a thread built by *kāla*, where My men lift the sinners on high at one time, and sink them down below at another time, where the sinners becoming suffocated for a long time, get unconscious, where their sufferings know no bounds, where it is filled with boiling oil, is named the Kālasutra Kuṇḍa. Then comes the Matsyoda Kuṇḍa, hollow like a well. It is filled with boiling water and it measures twenty-four *dhanus*. Next comes the Abatoda Kuṇḍa. It measures one hundred *dhanus*. The

sinners get their bodies burned and chastised by My persons, live there. No sooner they drop into the water of this *kuṇḍa*, then they are attacked with all sorts of diseases. Then comes the Krimikantuka Kuṇḍa. The sinners are bitten by the *krimi-kantuka* insects and cry out loudly, creating a general consternation and live there. Its another name is Aruntuda Kuṇḍa. Next comes the Pāmśu Kuṇḍa. It measures one hundred *dhanus*. It is overspread with burning rice husks. The sinners eat those hot husks and live there. Then comes the Paśavestana Kuṇḍa. It measures two miles. No sooner the sinners fall in this *kuṇḍa* than they are twined round by this rope or Pāśa. Hence its name. Then comes the Sūlaprota Kuṇḍa. It measures twenty *dhanus*. No sooner the sinners fall here than they are encircled with the *sūlāstra* (darts). Then comes the Prakampana Kuṇḍa. It measures one mile. It is filled with ice-cold water. The sinners, going there, shiver at once. Next follows the Ulka Kuṇḍa. It measures twenty *dhanus*. It is filled with burning to ashes and meteors. My messengers thrust the torches and meteors into the mouths of the sinners living there. Next comes the Andha-Kūpa Kuṇḍa. It is pitch-dark, shaped like a well, circular and very horrible. The sinners beat each other and eat the insects thereof. Their bodies are burnt with hot water; they cannot see anything on account of dire darkness.

102-118. The *kuṇḍa* where the sinners are pierced by various weapons is known as the Vedhana Kuṇḍa. It measures twenty *dhanus*. Then comes the Dandatādana Kuṇḍa. It measures sixteen *dhanus*. The sinners dwell here, threatened by My messengers. Then comes the Jālarandhra Kuṇḍa. Here the sinners live encompassed by a great net as fishes, etc., are tied in a net. Next comes the Dehachūrna Kuṇḍa. It is quite dark and its depth is that of the height of one *koti* persons; its circumference is twenty *dhanus*. The sinners, here, encompassed by iron chains are made to fall below where their bodies are reduced to powders and they are inert and almost unconscious. The *kuṇḍa* where the sinners are crushed and threatened by My messengers is known as the Dalana Kuṇḍa; it measures sixteen *dhanus* in circumference. Next comes the Śosana Kuṇḍa. It is deep up to the height of one hundred persons and it is very dark. It measures thirty *dhanus*. On

falling on the hot sand, the throats and palates of sinners get dried up. Their pain knows no bounds. Hence it is called the Śosana Kuṇḍa. Then comes the Kasa Kuṇḍa. It measures one hundred *dhanus*. It is filled with the juices of skins and its smell is very offensive. The sinners eat those astringent waters and live there. Then comes Śūrpa Kuṇḍa. It measures twelve *dhanus* and is extended like a winnowing basket. It is filled with hot iron dust and many sinners live there, eating those foetid iron dusts. Next comes the Jvālāmukha Kuṇḍa. It is filled with red hot sand. From the (bottom) center rises a flame, over-spreading the mouth of the *kuṇḍa*. It measures twenty *dhanus*. The sinners are burnt here by the flame and live awfully; they faint no sooner they are dropped in this *kuṇḍa*. Then comes the Dhumrāndha Kuṇḍa. It is dark, quite filled with smoke. Within that, hot bricks are placed. The sinners get suffocated with smoke; and their eye-sight becomes also obstructed. It measures one hundred *dhanus*. Then comes the Nāgabestana Kuṇḍa. It is encircled and filled with the serpents. No sooner the sinners are let fall there, than they are surrounded by the snakes.

O Sāvitrī! Thus I have spoken to you about the eighty-six *kuṇḍas* and their characteristics. Now what more do you want to hear? Say."

Here ends the Thirty-seventh Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the eighty-six Kuṇḍas and their characteristics in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXVIII—Glories of the Devī and Bhakti

1-6. Sāvitrī said: "O Lord! Give me devotion to the Devī, to that Ādyā-Śakti Bhagavatī Mahā-Māyā, Parameśvarī Māyī, Who is the essence of all essences, the door of final liberation to the human beings, and the cause of delivering them from hells, Who is the root of all *dharmas* that lead to *mukti*, Who destroys all the inauspiciousness, Who takes away the fear of all the *karmas*, and Who takes away always all the sins committed before. O Thou, the foremost amongst the knowers of the *Vedas!* How many kinds of *mukti*

are there in this world? What is the true *bhakti?* What are its characteristics? What is to be done by which the enjoyment of the *karmas* done can be desisted and nullified? O Bhagavān! The womankind has been created by the creator as devoid of any *tattva-jñāṇa* or true knowledge; now tell me something about this true knowledge. All the charities, sacrifices, bathing in the sacred places of pilgrimages, observing vows and austerities cannot be compared with one sixteenth of imparting knowledge to those who are ignorant (of true knowledge). Mother is hundred times superior to father; this is certain; but the spiritual Teacher, the giver of true knowledge, is hundred times more to be reverenced and worshipped than the mother, O Lord!"

7-79. Dharmarāja said: "O child! What boons you desired of Me before, I granted them all to you. Now I grant this boon to you: Let devotion towards Śakti now arise in your mind! O auspicious one! You want to hear the reciting of the glories of Śrī Devī; by this, both he who puts forward the question and he who hears the answer, all their families are delivered. When the Śesa-Nāga Ananta Deva with His thousand mouths is unable to recite the glories of the Devī; when Mahādeva cannot describe with His five mouths; when the creator Brahmā is incapable to recite Her glories with His four mouths; when Viṣṇu the omniscient falls back; when Kārtīkeya with His six mouths cannot sufficiently describe; when Gaṇeśa, the *guru* of the *gurus* of the great *yogīs* is incapable; when the Paṇḍitas, the knowers of the four *Vedas*, the essence of all the *śāstras,* cannot know even a bit of Her; when Sarasvatī becomes inert in going to describe Her glories; when Sanatkumara, Dharma, Sanātana, Sananda, Sanaka, Kapila, Sūrya and other sons of the creator have fallen back; when the other Siddhas, Yogīndras, Munīndras are quite incapable to glorify the deeds of Prakṛti Devī—then how can I recite fully Her Glories?

Whose lotus feet Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and others meditate; and lo! when it becomes difficult for Her devotees even to think of Her, then what wonder is there that She will be so very rare to others! Brahmā, skilled in the knowledge of the *Vedas* knows more of Her than what other ordinary

persons know so little of Her auspicious Glories. More than Brahmā, Gaṇeśa, the *guru* of the *jñānins*, knows; again Śambhu, the omniscient, knows the best of all. For in ancient times, the knowledge of the Prakṛti Devī was given to Him by Kṛṣṇa, the highest spirit, in a solitary place in the *rāsa-maṇḍalam* in the region of Goloka. Mahādeva, again, gave it to Dharma in the Śivaloka; Dharma again gave the Prakṛti-*mantra* to My father. My father became successful (*siddha*) in the worship of Prakṛti Devī when he practiced austerities. Of old, the Devas wanted to offer to me the government of the Yama-loka; but as I was very much dispassionate towards the world, I became unwilling and became ready to perform austerities. Then my Father told the glories of Prakṛti Devī. Now I describe to you what I heard from my Father and what is stated in the *Vedas*, though very difficult to comprehend.

Listen carefully, O fair-faced one! As eternal space does not know its own extent, so Prakṛti Devī Herself knows not Her own glories; then what can be said of any other person on this! She is the Self of all, endowed with all powers and lordship, the cause of all causes, the Lord of all, the origin of all and the preserver of all; She is eternal, always with Her cosmic body, full of everlasting bliss, without any special form, unrestrained, having no fear, without any disease and decay, unattached, the witness of all, the refuge of all, and higher than the highest; She is with Māyā and She is Mūla-Prakṛti; the objects created by Her being known as the Prakṛti creation; Who remains as Prakṛti and Puruṣa, as inseparable from each other as Agṇi and Her burning force; Mahā-Māyā, of the nature of everlasting existence, intelligence and bliss. Though formless, She assumes forms for the gratification of the desires of Her *bhaktas*. She created first the beautiful form of Gopāla Sundarī, the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa very lovely and beautiful, captivating the mind. His body is blue like the fresh raincloud; He is young and dressed like a cowherd. Millions of Kandarpas (the Love deity) are, as it were, playing in his body. His eyes vie with the midday lotus of autumn. The beauty of His face throws under shade millions and millions of full Moons. His body is decorated with invaluable ornaments decked with jewels. A sweet smile reigns ever in His lips; it is adorned moreover with

His yellow-colored invaluable robe. He is Parama Brahman. His whole body is burning with *brahma-teja*, the fire of Brahman.

His body is fiery. He is lovely, sweet to look at, of a peaceful temper, the Lord of Rādhā, and He is infinite. He is sitting on a jewel throne in the *rāsa-maṇḍalam*, and is incessantly looked upon by the smiling lovely *gopīs* at one and the same time. He is two-armed. A garland made of wildflowers is hanging from His neck. He is playing on His flute. His breast is resplendent with Kaustubha gem that He always wears. His body is anointed with *kunkuma* (saffron), *aguru* (the fragrant and cooling paste of the Aguru tree), musk and sandalwood paste. A garland of beautiful Campaka and Mālatī flowers is hanging from His neck. On His head, a beautiful crest is seen, a little obliquely situated, in the form of the beautiful Moon. Thus the *bhaktas*, filled with *bhakti*, meditate on Him.

O child! It is through His fear that the creator is doing His work of creation of this Universe; and is recording the *prārabdha* fruits of their *karmas*. It is through His fear that Viṣṇu is awarding the fruits of *tapas* and preserving the Universe. By His command, Kālagṇi Rudra Deva is destroying all. By Whose favor Śiva has become Mṛtyumjaya, the conqueror of death and the foremost of the *jñānins;* knowing whom Śiva has become Himself endowed with knowledge and the Lord of the knowers of knowledge, full of the highest bliss, devotion and dispassion. Through Whose fear the wind becomes the foremost of runners and carries things, the Sun gives heat, Indra gives rain, Yama destroys, Agṇi burns, and Water cools all the things. By whose command the Regents of the (ten) quarters of the sky are watching and preserving nice order; through Whose fear the planets are describing their several orbits. Through Whose fear, trees flower and yield fruits; by Whose command *kāla* destroys all. By Whose command all beings, whether on land or in water, are quitting their lives in time; until the proper time comes no man dies even if he be pierced whether in battle or in danger. By Whose command the wind supports the water; the water supports the tortoise; the tortoise supports Ananta and Ananta supports the earth; the earth supports the oceans, mountain and all the jewels. The

earth is of the nature of forgiveness—She endures all. For this reason all things, moving and non-moving, rest on Her and again melt away in Her.

Seventy-one *divya-yugas* constitute one Indra's life period. Twenty-eight Indra's lifetimes constitute Brahmā's one day and one night. Thus thirty days constitute Brahmā's one month; so two months constitute one *ṛtu* (season); six *ṛtu* make one year. Thus one hundred years constitute Brahmā's life. When Brahmā dies, Śrī Hari's eyes close. That is the *prākritik-pralaya*. At this time, everything moving and non-moving, from the Deva-loka to Bhūr-loka (earth) dies. The creator Brahmā gets dissolved in the navel of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The four-armed Viṣṇu of Vaikuṇṭha, sleeps on *ksīra-samudra*, the ocean of milk. He dissolves on the left side of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the highest spirit. All the other Śaktis (forces) dissolve in Mūla-Prakṛti, the Māyā of Viṣṇu. The Mūla-Prakṛti Durgā, the presiding Deity of *buddhi* (intelligence) dissolves in the *buddhi* of Kṛṣṇa. Skanda, the part of Nārāyaṇa, dissolves in His breast. Gaṇeśa the foremost of the Devas, born in part of Kṛṣṇa, dissolves in the arm of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. And those who are born in parts of Padmā dissolve in Her body, and Padmā dissolves in the body of Rādhā. All the cowherdesses and all the bodies of the Devas dissolve in Rādhā's body. But Rādhā, the presiding Deity of the *prāṇa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, dissolves in the *prāṇa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Sāvitrī, the four *Vedas* and all the *śāstras* dissolve in Sarasvatī; and Sarasvatī gets dissolved in the tongue of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Highest Self. The *gopās* in the region of Goloka dissolve in the pores of His skin; the *prāṇa-vāyu* of all dissolve in His *prāṇa-vāyu*; the fire dissolves in the fire in His belly; water dissolves in the tip of His tongue, and the Vaiṣṇavas, (devotees of Viṣṇu), drinking the nectar of *bhakti*, the essence of all essences, dissolve in His lotus feet. All smaller Virāts dissolve in the great Virāt, and the great Virāt dissolves in the body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

O child! He is Kṛṣṇa, on the pores of Whose skin are situated endless universes; at the closing of Whose eyes, the *prākritik-pralaya* comes and on the opening of Whose eyes, the creation takes place. The closing and opening of His eyes takes the same time. Brahmā's creation lasts one hundred years and the *pralaya* lasts one hundred years. O one of good

vows! There is no counting how many Brahmās or how many creations and dissolutions have taken place. As one cannot count the number of dust particles, so one cannot count the creations and dissolutions. This is the great unspeakable wonder! Again on Whose closing of the eyes the *pralaya* takes place and on whose opening of the eyes the creation takes place, out of the will of God, that Kṛṣṇa dissolves at the time of *pralaya* in Prakṛti. This highest Śakti, the Mūla-Prakṛti is the only one without a second; the only one *nirguṇa-brahman* and the highest Puruṣa. She is considered as *sat*—really existing, by the seers of the *Vedas*. Such a thing as Mūla-Prakṛti is the unchanged state (*mukti*). During the *pralaya*, this only one Mūla-Prakṛti appears as *jñāṇa-śakti* or the power of knowledge. Who can in this universe recite Her glories?

Mukti is of four kinds: (1) *sālokya*, (2) *sārūpya*, (3) *sāmīpya* and (4) *nirvāṇa*. So it is stated in the *Vedas*. Out of them, *bhakti* towards the Deva is the highest; so much so that the Deva-*bhakti* is superior to *mukti. Mukti* gives *sālokya, sārūpya, sāmīpya* and *nirvāṇa*. But the *bhaktas* do not want anything. They want service of the Lord. They do not want anything else. The state of becoming Śiva, of becoming an *amara* or an immortal, becoming a Brahmā, the birth, death, disease, old age, fear, sorrow, or wealth, or assuming a divine form, or *nirvāṇa* or *mokṣa*—all are looked on alike by the *bhaktas:* with disregard and contempt. Because *mukti* is without any service, while *bhakti* increases this service.

Thus I have told you the difference between *bhakti* and *mukti*. Now hear about the cutting off of the fruits of the past *karmas*. O chaste one! This service of the highest Lord severs the ties of *karmas* (past acts). This service is really true knowledge. So, O child! I have now told you the real truth, leading to auspicious results. Now you can go freely as you desire."

Thus saying to Sāvitrī, Yama, the son of Sūrya, gave life back to her husband. Blessing her, He became ready to go to His own abode. Seeing Dharmarāja ready to go away, Sāvitrī became sorry to have the bereavement of good company, bowed down at His feet and began to cry.

Yama, the ocean of mercy, hearing the crying of Sāvitrī began to weep and told the following words:

80-96. Dharma said: "O child! You enjoy in this holy Bhārata happiness for one *lakh* years, and you will in the end go to the Deviloka or Maṇidvīpa. Now go back to your house and observe for fourteen years the vow called Sāvitrī-vrata for the *mukti* of women. This *vrata* is to he observed on the fourteenth day of the white fortnight in the month of Jyaiṣṭha. Then observe the Mahā-Lakṣmī Vrata. Its proper time is the eighth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhādra. For sixteen years consecutively without any break this vow is to be observed. The woman who practices with devotion this vow, goes to the abode of Mūla-Prakṛti. You would worship on every Tuesday in every month the Devī Maṅgala Caṇḍikā, the giver of all good; on the eighth day in the bright fortnight you should worship Devī Sāsthī (Devasenā); you should worship Manasā Devī, the giver of all *siddhis*, on the *samkranti* day (when the Sun enters another sign) in every year; you should worship Rādhā, the central figure of *rāsa*, more than the *prāṇa* of Kṛṣṇa on every full Moon night in the month of Kārtik, and you should observe fasting on the eighth day in the bright fortnight and worship the Viṣṇu-Māyā Bhagavatī Devī, the destructrix of all difficulties and dangers.

(Note: The Rāsa is the playing out of the Vedantic saying of Brahmā as "Raso vai Sah." He is of the nature of Rāsa, the most sweet and lovely Divine Principle which unites the Rasika and the Rasikā.)

The chaste woman, having husband and sons, who worships the World Mother Mūla-Prakṛti, whether in *yantra*, or in *mantra* or in image, enjoys all pleasures in this world; and in the end, goes to the Deviloka or Maṇidvīpa. O child! The worshipper *sādhaka* (one who is in the way to success) must worship all the maṇifestations of the Devī, day and night. At all times one must worship the omnipresent Durgā, the highest Īsvarī. There is no other way to attain blessedness than this."

Thus saying, Dharmarāja went to His own abode. Sāvitrī, too, with her husband Satyavān went to her home. Both Sāvitrī and Satyavān, when they reached home, narrated all their stories to their friends and acquaintances. In time, by the blessing of Yama, Sāvitrī's father got sons, his father-in-law recovered his eyesight and kingdom, and Sāvitrī Herself got sons. For one *lakh* years, Sāvitrī enjoyed pleasures in this holy land of Bhārata, and ultimately went with her husband to Deviloka. Sāvitrī is the presiding Deity of the Sūrya-maṇḍalam, the solar orb. The Sun is the central Para-brahman. The Gāyatrī *mantra*, the presiding Devī, proves the existence of the highest Brahman in the center of the Sun. Therefore She is called Sāvitrī. Or Her name is Sāvitrī because all the *Vedas* have come out of Her. Thus I have narrated the excellent anecdote of Sāvitrī, and the fruitions of the *karmas* of the several *jīvas*. Now what more do you want to hear? Say."

Here ends the Thirty-eighth Chapter in the Ninth Skandha on the glories of the Devī and on the nature of Bhakti in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXIX—the Story of Mahā-Lakṣmī

1-3 Nārada said: "O Lord! I have heard in the discourse to Sāvitrī by Yama about the formless Devī Mūla-Prakṛti and the glories of Sāvitrī, all true and leading to the endless good. Now I want to hear the story of the Devilakṣmī. O Thou, chief of the knowers of the *Vedas!* What is the nature of Lakṣmī? By whom was She first worshipped? and by what *mantra?* Kindly describe Her glories to me."

4-33. Nārāyaṇa said: "Of old, in the beginning of the Prākritik creation, from the left side of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Spirit, appeared in the *rāsa-maṇḍalam* a Devī. She looked exceedingly handsome, of a dark blue color, of spacious hips, of thin waist, and with high breast, looking twelve years old, of steady youth, of a color of white *campaka* flower and very lovely. The beauty of Her face throws under shade millions and millions of autumnal full Moons. Before Her wide expanded eyes, the midday lotus of the

autumnal season becomes highly ashamed. By the will of God, this Devī suddenly divided Herself into two parts. The two looked equal in every respect; whether in beauty, qualities, age, loveliness, color, body, spirit, dress, ornaments, smile, glance, love or humaṇity, they were perfectly equal.

Now She who appeared from the right side is named Rādhā and She who came from the left side is named Mahā-Lakṣmī. Rādhā wanted first the two-armed Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who was higher than the highest; then Mahā-Lakṣmī wanted Him. Rādhā came out of the right side and wanted first Kṛṣṇa; so Kṛṣṇa, too, divided himself at once into two parts. From His right side came out the two-armed and from his left side came out the four-armed. The two-armed person first made over to Mahā-Lakṣmī the four-armed one; then the two-armed person Himself took Rādhā.

Lakṣmī looks on the whole universe with a cooling eye; hence She is named Lakṣmī and as She is great, She is called Mahā-Lakṣmī. And for that reason the Lord of Rādhā is two-armed and the Lord of Lakṣmī is four-armed. Rādhā is pure *aprākritik śuddha-sattva,* of the nature of pure *sattva-guṇa*, the illuminating attribute, and surrounded by the *gopas* and *gopīs*. The four-armed Puruṣa, on the other hand, took Lakṣmī (Padmā) to Vaikuṇṭha. The two-armed person is Kṛṣṇa; and the four-armed is Nārāyaṇa. They are equal in all respects.

Mahā-Lakṣmī became many by Her *yogik* powers; She remained in full in Vaikuṇṭha and assumed many forms in parts. Mahā-Lakṣmī of Vaikuṇṭha is full, of pure *sattva-guṇa*, and endowed with all sorts of wealth and prosperity. She is the crest of womankind as far as loving one's husbands is concerned. She is the Svarga-Lakṣmī in the Heavens; the Nāga-Lakṣmī of the serpents, the Nāgas, in the nether regions; the Rāja-Lakṣmī of the kings and the Household Lakṣmī of the householders. She resides in the houses of householders as prosperity, and the most auspicious of all good things. She is the progenetrix, She is the Surabhi of cows and She is the *dakśiṇā* (the sacrificial fee) in sacrifices. She is the daughter of the milk ocean and she is Padminī, the beauty of the spheres of the Moon and the Sun. She is the

luster and beauty of the ornaments, gems, fruits, water, kings, queens, heavenly women, of all the houses, grains, clothings, cleansed places, images, auspicious jars, pearls, jewels, crest of jewels, garlands, diamonds, milk, sandalwood, beautiful twigs, fresh rain cloud, or of all other colors.

She was first worhipped in Vaikuṇṭha by Nārāyaṇa. Next She was worshipped by Brahmā and then by Śaṅkara with devotion. She was worshipped by Viṣṇu in the *kṣirode-samudra*. Then She was worshipped by Svāyambhuva Manu, then by Indras amongst men, then by Munis, Ṛṣis, good householders, by the Gandharvas in the Gandharvaloka, and by the Nāgas in the Nāgaloka. She was worshipped with devotion by Brahmā for one fortnight, commencing from the bright eighth day in the month of Bhādra and ending on the eighth day of the dark fortnight in the three worlds. She was worshipped by Viṣṇu with devotion in the three worlds on the meritorious Tuesday in the months of Pausa, Chaitra and Bhādra. Manu also worshipped Her on the Pausa Sankrānti (the last day of the month of Pausa when the Sun enters another sign) and on the auspicious Tuesday in the month of Māgha. Thus the worship of Mahā-Lakṣmī is made prevalent in the three worlds. She was worshipped by Indra the Lord of the Devas, and by Maṅgala (Mars) on Tuesday. She was then worshipped by Kedāra, Nīla, Subala, Dhruva, Uttānapada, Śakra, Bali, Kaśyapa, Dakṣa, Kardama, Sūrya, Priyavrata, Chandra, Vāyu, Kuvera, Varuṇa, Yama, Hutāsana and others. Thus Her worship extended by and by to all the places. She is the Presiding Deity of all wealth; so She is the wealth of all."

Here ends the Thirty-ninth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the story of Mahā-Lakṣmī in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XL—the Birth of Lakṣmī

1-2. Nārada said: "O Lord! How did the eternal Devī Mahā-Lakṣmī the dweller in Vaikuṇṭha, the beloved of Nārāyaṇa, the presiding Deity of

Vaikuṇṭha, come down to the earth and how She, became the daughter of the ocean? By whom was She first praised? Kindly describe all these in detail to me and oblige."

3-10. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! In ancient days when on Durvāsā's curse, Indra was dispossesed of his kingdom, all the Devas came down to earth. Lakṣmī, too, getting angry, quit the heavens out of pain and sorrow, went to Vaikuṇṭha and took the shelter of Nārāyaṇa. The Devas then went to Brahmā with their hearts full of sorrow, and taking Him from there, they all went to Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṇṭha. Going there they all took refuge of the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha. They were very much distressed and their throats, palate and lips were quite dry. At that time Lakṣmī, the wealth and prosperity of all, came down on earth by the command of Nārāyaṇa and became born in part as the daughter of the ocean. Then the Devas and Daityas churned the Kṣīroda Ocean and, out of that, Mahā-Lakṣmī appeared. Viṣṇu looked on Her. Her joy knew no bounds. She smiling, granted boons to the Devas and then offered a garland of flowers on the neck of Nārāyaṇa (as a symbol of marriage celebrated). O Nārada! the Devas, on the other hand, got back their kingdoms from the Asuras. They then worshipped and chanted hymns to Mahā-Lakṣmī and since then became free from further dangers and troubles."

11-12. Nārada said: "O Bhagavān! Durvāsā was the best of the Munis; he was attached to Brahmā and had spiritual knowledge. Why did he curse Indra? What offense had he committed? How did the Devas and Daityas churn the ocean? How, and by what hymns Lakṣmī became pleased and appeared before Indra? What passed on between them? Say all this, O Lord."

13-25. Nārāyaṇa said: "In ancient days, Indra the Lord of the three worlds, intoxicated with wine and becoming lustful and shameless, began to enjoy Rambhā in a lonely grove. After having enjoyed her, he became attracted to her; his mind being wholly drawn to her, he remained there in that forest, his mind becoming very passionate. Indra then saw the Muni Durvāsā on his way from Vaikuṇṭha to Kailāśa, burning with the fire of Brahman. From

the body of the Ṛṣi emitted, as it were, the rays of the thousand midday Suns. On his head was golden matted hair. On his breast there was the hoary holy thread; he wore torn clothes; on his hands there was the *daṇḍa* and *kāmaṇḍalū;* on his forehead there was the bright *tilaka* in the form of the crescent Moon.

One hundred thousand disciples, thoroughly versed in the *Vedas* and *Vedāṅgas*, were attending him. The intoxicated Purandara, seeing him, bowed down to him and he began to chant with devotion hymns to his disciples also. They were very glad. The Ṛṣi with his disciples then blessed Indra and gave him one Pārijāta flower.

When the Muni was returning from the region of Vaikuṇṭha, Viṣṇu gave him that beautiful Pārijāta flower. Old age, death, disease, sorrows, etc., all are removed by the influence of the flower; and final liberation is also attained. Devendra was intoxicated with his wealth; so taking the flower given by the Ṛṣi, he threw it on the head of the elephant Airārata. No sooner the elephant touched the flower, than he became suddenly like Viṣṇu, as it were, in beauty, form, qualities, fire and age. The elephant then forsook Indra and entered into a dense forest. The Lord of the Devas could in no way get him under his control. On the other hand, the Muni Durvāsā, seeing that Mahendra had thus dishonored the flower, became inflamed with rage and cursed him saying, "O Indra! You are so mad with wealth that you have dishonored me. The flower that I gave you so lovingly, you have thrown that, out of vanity, on the elephant's head!

26-46. No sooner one gets the food, water, fruits that had been offered to Viṣṇu, one should eat that at once. Otherwise one incurs the sin of *brahma-hatyā*. If anybody forsakes the things offered to Viṣṇu that he has got perchance, he becomes destitute of wealth, prosperity, intelligence and his kingdom. And if he eats the food already offered to Viṣṇu with devotion, he then elevates his hundred families passed before him and he himself becomes liberated while living. If anybody daily eats Viṣṇu's *naivedyam* (food offered to Viṣṇu) and bows down before Him, or worships Hari with devotion and chants hymns to Him, he becomes like Viṣṇu in energy and

wealth. By mere touch with the air round about his body, the places of pilgrimage become all purified. O you stupid! The earth becomes purified by the contact of the dust of the feet of such a one devoted to Viṣṇu. If anybody eats the food unoffered to Hari and flesh that is not offered to any Deity; if he eats the food of any unchaste woman, any woman without husband sons, the food offered at any Śūdra's *srāddha* (funeral) ceremony, the food offered by a Brāhmaṇa who is a priest to the Śūdras in honor of a Śiva Liṅgam, the food of a Brāhmaṇa priest who subsists on the presents of a temple, the food of one who sells his daughter, the food of one who subsists on dealing with womb concerns, the leavings of others, the stale food left after all others had eaten, the food of the husband of an unmarried girl (twelve years old in whom menstruation has commenced), the driver of oxen, the food of one uninitiated in one's *iṣṭā-mantram*, of one who burns a corpse, of a Brāhmaṇa who goes to one not fit for going, the food of a rebel against friends, of one who is faithless, treacherous, who gives false evidence, the food of a Brāhmaṇa who accepts offerings in a sacred place of pilgrimage, all his sins (incurred in the ways above-mentioned) will be removed if he eats the *prasādam* of Viṣṇu, i.e., the food offered to Viṣṇu. Even if a Caṇḍāla be attached to the service of Viṣṇu, he sanctifies millions of persons born in his family before him. And the man who is devoid of the devotion to Hari is not able even to save himself. If anybody takes unknowingly the remains of an offering (such as flowers) made to Viṣṇu, he will certainly be freed from all the sins incurred in his seven births. And if he does this knowingly and with intense devotion, he will certainly be freed of all sorts of sins incurred in his *koti* births.

So, O Indra! I am a devotee of Śrī Hari. And when you have cast away the Pārijāta flower offered by me on the elephant's head, then I say unto you that the Mahā-Lakṣmī will leave you and She will go back to Nārāyaṇa. I am highly devoted to Nārāyaṇa; so I do not fear anybody, I fear neither the creator, nor *kāla* the destroyer, nor old age, nor death; what to speak of other petty persons! I do not fear your father Prajāpati Kaśyapa nor do I fear your family priest Bṛhaspati. Now he on whose head there lies the

flower Pārijāta offered by me, verily he should be worshipped by all means."

Hearing these words of Durvāsā, Indra became bewildered with fear, and being greatly distressed and holding the feet of Muni, cried out loudly. He said: "The curse is now well inflicted on me; and it has caused my delusion to vanish. Now I do not want back my Rāja Lakṣmī from you; instruct me on knowledge. This wealth is the source of all coils; it is the cause of the veil to all knowledge, it hides the final liberation and it is a great obstacle on the way to get the highest devotion."

47-67. The Muni said: "This birth, death, old age, disease and afflictions, all come from wealth and the maṇipulation of great power. Being blind by the darkness of wealth, he does not see the road to *mukti*. The stupid man that is intoxicated with wealth is like the one that is intoxicated with wine. Surrounded by many friends, he is surrounded by the unbreakable bondage. The man that is intoxicated with wealth, blind with property and overwhelmed with these things has no thought for the real knowledge. He who is *rājasik* is very much addicted to passions and desires; he never sees the path to *sattva-guṇa*. The man that is blind with sense-objects is of two kinds, firstly, *rājasik* and secondly *tāmasik*. He who has no knowledge of the *śāstras* is *tāmasik* and he who has the knowledge of the *śāstras* is *rājasik*. O child of the Devas! Two paths are mentioned in the *śāstras;* one is *pravṛtti*, going towards the sense objects and the other is *nivṛtti*, going away from them. The *jīvas* first follow the path of *pravṛtti*, the path that is painful, gladly and of their own accord like a madman. As bees, blind with the desire of getting honey, go to the lotus bud and get themselves entangled there, so the *jīvas*, the embodied souls, desirous first of getting enjoyments come to this very painful circle of births and deaths, this worldly life, which in the end is realized as vapid and the only cause of old age, death, and sorrow, and get themselves enchained there. For many births he travels gladly in various wombs, ordained by his own *karmas*, until at last by the favor of gods, he comes in contact with the saints. Thus one out of a thousand or out of a hundred finds means to cross this terrible ocean of

world. When the saintly persons kindle the lamp of knowledge and show the way to *mukti*, then the *jīva* makes an attempt to sever this bondage to the world. After many births, many austerities and many fastings, he then finds safely the way to *mukti*, leading to the highest happiness. O Indra! What you asked me, I thus heard from my *guru*."

O Nārada! hearing the words of the Muni Durvāsā Indra became dispassionate towards the *saṁsāra*. Day by day his feeling of dispassion increased. One day, when he returned to his own home from the hermitage of the Muni, he saw the heavens overspread by the Daityas and it had become terrible. At some places outrage and oppression knew no bounds; some places were devoid of friends; at some places, some persons had lost their fathers, mothers, wives, relations; so no rest and repose could be found. Thus, seeing the heavens in the hands of the enemies, Indra went out in quest of Bṛhaspati, the family preceptor of the Devas. Seeking to and fro, Indra ultimately went to the banks of the Mandākinī and saw that his Gurudeva had bathed in the waters of the Mandākinī, and sitting with his face turned towards the east, towards the Sun, was meditating on Parabrahman, Who has His faces turned everywhere. Tears were flowing from his eyes and the hairs of the body stood erect with delight. He was elderly in knowledge; the spiritual teacher of all, religious, served by all great men; he was held as most dear to all the friends. Those who are *jñānins* regard him as their *guru*. He was the eldest of all his brothers; he was considered as very unpopular to the enemies of the Devas. Seeing the family priest Bṛhaspati merged in that state of meditation, Indra waited there. When after one *prahara* (three hours), Gurudeva got up, Indra bowed down to his feet and began to weep and cry out repeatedly. Then he informed his *guru* about his curse from a Brāhmaṇa, his acquiring the true knowledge as so very rare, and the wretched state of Amarāvatī, wrought by the enemies.

68-92. O best of Brāhmaṇas! Hearing thus the words of the disciple, the intelligent speaker Bṛhaspati spoke with his eyes reddened out of anger. "O Lord of the Devas! I have heard everything that you said; do not cry; have patience; hear attentively what I say. The wise politicians of good behavior,

with moral precepts, never lose their heads and get themselves distressed in times of danger. Nothing is everlasting; whether property or adversity; all are transient; they only give troubles. All are under one's own *karma;* one is master of one's own *karma*. What had been done in previous births, so one will have to reap the fruits afterwards. Therefore property or adversity, all are due to one's own *karma*. This happens to all persons eternally, births after births. Pain and happiness are like the ring of a rolling wheel. So what pain is there? It is already stated that one's own *karma* must be enjoyed in this holy Bhārata. The man enjoys the effects of his own *karmas*, auspicious or inauspicious. Never the *karma* gets exhausted in one hundred *koti kalpas*, without their effects being enjoyed. *Karma*, whether auspicious or inauspicious must be enjoyed.

Thus it is stated in the *Vedas* and as well by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme spirit. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa addressed Brahmā, the lotus-born, in the *Sāma Veda Sākhā* that all persons acquire their births, whether in Bhārata or in any other country, according to the *karma* that he had done. The course of a Brāhmaṇa comes though this *karma;* and the blessings of a Brāhmaṇa come again by this *karma*. By *karma* one gets great wealth and prosperity, and by *karma* again one gets poverty. You may take one hundred *koti* births; the fruit of *karma* must follow you.

O Indra! The fruit of *karma* follows one like one's shadow. Without enjoyment, that can never die. The effects of *karma* become increased or decreased according to time, place, and the person concerned. As you will give away anything to persons of different natures, in different times and in different places, your merit acquired will also vary accordingly. Gifts made on certain special days bring in *koti* times the fruits (merits, *puñyam*) or infinite times, or even more than that. Again gifts, similar in nature, made in similar paces yield *puñyam* the same, in character also. Gifts made in different countries yield *puñyam koti* times, infinite times, or even more than that. But similar things given to similar persons yield similar *puñyam*. As the grains vary in their natures as the fields differ, so gifts made to

different persons yield different grades of *puñyam* infinitely superior or infinitely inferior as the case may be.

Giving things to a Brāhmaṇa on any ordinary day yields simple *puñyam* only. But if the gift be made to a Brahmān on an *amavasyā* day (new moon day) or on a *sankrānti* day (the day when the Sun enters another sign) then hundred times more *puñyam* is acquired. Again, charities made in the *chāturmāsya* period (the vow that lasts for four months in the rainy season) or on the full moon day, yield infinite *puñyams*. So charities made on the occasion of the lunar eclipses yield *koti* times the result, and if made on the occasion of the solar eclipse yield ten times more *puñyams*. Charities made on Aksayaya Tritīyā or the Navamī day yield infinite and endless results. So charities on other holy days yield religious merits higher than those made on ordinary days.

As charities made on holy days yield religious merits, so bathing, reciting *mantrams*, and other holy acts yield meritorious results. As superior results are obtained by pious acts; inferior results are obtained by impious acts. As an earthen potter makes pots, jars, etc. out of the earth with the help of rod, wheel, earthen cups or plates and motion, so the creator awards respective fruits to different persons by the help of this thread (continuity) of *karma*. Therefore if you want to have cessation of this fruition of *karma*, then worship Nārāyaṇa, by whose command all these things of nature are created. He is the creator of even Brahmā the creator, the preserver of Viṣṇu the preserver, the destroyer of Śiva the destroyer and the *kāla* (the great time) of *kāla* (time). Śaṅkara has said: 'He who remembers Madhusūdana (a name of Viṣṇu) in great troubles, his dangers cease and happiness begins'."

O Nārada! The wise Bṛhaspati thus advised Indra and then embraced him and gave him his hearty blessings and good wishes."

Here ends the Fortieth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the birth of Lakṣmī in the discourse of Nārada and Nārāyaṇa in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XLI—Churning the Ocean and Appearance of Lakṣmī

1-2. Nārāyaṇa said: "O twice-born! Indra then remembered Hari and took Bṛhaspati, the *guru* of the Devas, to the assembly of Brahmā accompanied by the other Devas. They soon reached the region of Brahmā and no sooner they saw Him, than Indra and the other Devas and Bṛhaspati all bowed down to Him.

3-25. Bṛhaspati, the *āchārya* of the Devas, then communicated all to Brahmā. Hearing this, He smiled and spoke, addressing Indra: 'O Indra! You have been born in My race; nay, you are My grandson; the *ārya* Bṛhaspati is your *guru;* you yourself are the ruler of the Devas and you are very wise and sagacious; the mother of your father is the powerful Dakṣa, a great Viṣṇu-*bhakta*. How is it, then that when the three sides of the family are pure, one would turn out so haughty and arrogant! Whose mother is so much devoted to her husband, whose father, mother's father and mother's brother are self-controlled and of pure *sattva-guṇa*, he is not expected to be so very haughty! Every man may be guilty to Hari for the three faults: For some fault due to that of his father, or of his mother's father, or of *guru*, the spiritual teacher. Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa resides in this great holy temple of our physical body, controlling the hearts of all. At whatever moment Śrī Nārāyaṇa quits this temple-body, at that moment this body becomes dead. I myself am the mind; Śaṅkara is the knowledge, Viṣṇu is the vital breaths, Bhagavatī Durgā is the intelligence (*buddhi*), sleep, etc. the powers of Prakṛti; when these are being reflected on by the *ātman*, *jīva* is formed with a body for enjoyment called *bhoga-śarīrabhṛt*. When a king departs, his attendants also follow him; so when this *ātman* departs from this temple of body, his attendants mind, *buddhi*, etc., instantly depart from this body and follow the *ātman*. O Indra! We all, are verily, the parts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I myself, Śiva, Ananta Deva, Viṣṇu, Dharma, Mahā-Virāt, you all are His parts and entirely devoted to Him. And you have shown contempt for His flower. Bhagavān Śaṅkara, the Lord of the Bhūtas, worshipped the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with that flower. The Ṛṣi Durvāsā gave you that flower. But you

showed disrespect to it. The flower Pārijāta, after being offered at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, should be placed on the head of an immortal; His worship is to be done first; and it is the foremost amongst the Devas.

So you are now being afflicted by the inevitable course of fate; fate is the most powerful of all. Who can save that unlucky man against whom fate has turned? Seeing that you have rejected the flower offered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Lakṣmī Devī has left you out of anger. Now come with Me and with your family priest Bṛhaspati to Vaikuṇṭha, and worship the Lord of Lakṣmī; then by His grace you may get back your heavens.'

Thus saying, Brahmā with Indra and all the other Devas, went to the eternal Puruṣa, Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa and saw that He was full of fire and energy like one hundred *koti* summer midday Suns, yet perfectly cool and calm. He has no beginning, and no end, nor any middle. He is infinite. The four-armed *pārisadas*, Sarasvatī, the four *Vedas* and the Ganges all were surrounding Him. Seeing Him, Brahmā and the other Devas bowed down with devotion and began to chant hymns to Him with tears in their eyes. Brahmā then informed Him of everything when all the Devas, dispossessed of their places, began to weep before Him. Nārāyaṇa saw that the Devas were very afraid and much distressed. They had no jeweled ornaments as before, no vehicles (*vāhanas*), nor the Daivic splendor as before, not that brillance; always fearful.

Then Nārāyaṇa, the destroyer of fear, seeing the Devas in that state, addressed Brahmā and the other Devas: O Brāhmaṇa! O Devas! Discard all fears. What fear can overcome you? I am here. I will give you again the immoveable prosperous Rājya-Lakṣmī (the Lakṣmī of the kings).

26-47. But for the present, I give you some advice proper for this moment. Listen. There are endless universes where exist innumerable persons. All of them are under Me. So know verily, that I am under them also. My devotees regard Me as the highest. They know no other than Me; they are fearless; so I do not remain in that house where My devotees are dissatisfied. I instantly quit that house with Lakṣmī. Durvāsā Ṛṣi is born in

part of Śaṅkara. He is highly devoted to Me. He is a *pakkā* Vaiṣṇava. He cursed you and, as a matter of fact, I and Lakṣmī instantly left your house.

Lakṣmī does not reside in that house where conchshells are not blown, where there are no Tulasī trees, where there is no worship of Śiva and Śivā, where the Brāhmaṇas are not fed. O Brāhmaṇa! O Devas! Where I and My *bhaktas* are blamed, Mahā-Lakṣmī becomes greatly displeased. She instantly goes away out of that house. Lakṣmī does not stay even for a moment in that house where the stupid person, without any devotion for Me, takes his food on the Harivāsara Ekādaśī day (the eleventh day of the moon's wane or increase) or on My anniversary birthday. If anybody sells My name or his own daughter, where the guests are not served, Lakṣmī quits that house instantly and goes away.

That *guru* is the real *guru* who, being capable, imparts the name of God to worthy persons without taking any fee at all. If the son of an unchaste woman be a Brāhmaṇa, he and the husband of an unchaste woman are great sinners. If anybody goes to such a person's house or eats the food of a Śūdra during a Śrāddha ceremony, Lakṣmī becomes very angry and vacates that house. Being a Brāhmaṇa, if one burns a Śūdra's corpse, one becomes very wretched and the vilest of the Brāhmaṇas. Lakṣmī never stays for a moment more in that house. Being a Brāhmaṇa, if he be a Śūdra's cook and drives oxen, Lakṣmī fears to drink water there and quits his house. Being a Brāhmaṇa, if his heart be unholy, if he be cruel, envies others and blames persons, if he officiates as a priest for the Śūdra, Lakṣmī Devī never stays in his house. The World-Mother never stays even for a moment in his house who eats at the house of one who marries an unmarried girl twelve years old in whom menstruation has commenced. He who cuts grass by his nails, or writes on the ground with his nails, or from whose house a Brāhmaṇa guest goes back disappointed, Lakṣmī never stays in his house. If any Brāhmaṇa eats food at the early sunrise, sleeps during the day or engages in a sexual intercourse during the day, Lakṣmī never stays in his house. Lakṣmī slips away from that Brāhmaṇa who is devoid of *āchāra* (rules of conduct), who accepts gifts from Śūdras,

from him who remains uninitiated in his *mantram*. The ignorant man who sleeps naked and with his feet wet, who laughs always, and always talks at random on disconnected subjects like a madman, is forsaken at once by Lakṣmī. Lakṣmī becomes angry and goes away from the house of that man who applies oil all over his body first and then touches the bodies of others, and always makes some sounding noise on several parts of his body. If any Brāhmaṇa forsakes observing vows, fastings, the *sandhyā* ceremony, purity and devotion to Viṣṇu, Kāmalā (Lakṣmī) does not remain in his house any longer. If anybody blames always the Brāhmaṇas and shows his hatred always towards the Brāhmaṇas, if he does injury to the animals, and if he does not indulge in his heart anything of pity, kindness, Lakṣmī, the Mother of the Worlds, quits him. O Lotus-born! But where Hari is worshipped and Hari's Name is chanted, Lakṣmī, the Mother of all auspiciousness, remains there. Lakṣmī remains where the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His *bhaktas* are sung.

48-59. Lakṣmī always remains there with the greatest gladness where conchshells are blown, where there are conchsells, the *śālagrāma* stone, the Tulasī leaves and the service and meditation of Lakṣmī are daily done. Where the phallic emblem of Śiva is worshipped, and His glories sung, where Śrī Durgā is worshipped and Her glories are sung, Lakṣmī, the dweller in the Lotus, remains there. Where the Brāhmaṇas are honored and they are gladly feasted, where all the Devas are worshiped; the chaste Lakṣmī, the lotus-faced, remains there."

Thus saying to the Devas, the Lord of Lakṣmī said: "O Devī! Go without any any delay to the Kṣīroda Ocean and incarnate there in part." He then addressed Brahmā and said: "O Lotus-born! You also better go there and churn the Kṣīroda Ocean; when Lakṣmī will arise, give Her to the Devas."

O Devaṛṣi! Thus saying, the Lord Kāmalā went to His inner compartment. On the other hand the Devas, after a long time, reached the shores of the Kṣīroda Ocean. The Devas and the Daityas then made the golden mountain Sumeru the churning rod, the Deva Kūrma (the Divine tortoise), the churning pot and Ananta Deva (the thousand-headed serpent) the

churning cord, and began to churn the ocean. While churning was going on, by and by arose Dhanvantarī, *amṛta* (the nectar), the horse Uchchaihśravā, various other invaluable jewels that were desired, the elephant Airāvata and the beautiful-eyed Lakṣmī. Viṣṇupriyā, Śrī Lakṣmī Devī, no sooner She got up from the ocean, She, the chaste woman, presented on the neck of Nārāyaṇa, of beautiful appearance, the Lord of all, Who slept on the Kṣīroda ocean the garland (indicative of accepting Him for her bridegroom). Then Brahmā and Maheśvara and the other Devas gladly worshipped Her and chanted hymns. At this time Lakṣmī Devī being pleased, cast a favorable glance towards the homes of the Devas, in order to free them from their curse. Then, by the grace of Mahā-Lakṣmī and by the granting of the boon by Brahmā, the Devas got back their own possessions from the hands of the Daityas.

O Nārada! Thus I have described to you the story of Lakṣmī Devī, the Essence of all Essences, and very pleasant to hear. Now what more do you want to hear? Say."

Here ends the Forty-first Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the churning of the ocean and on the appearing of Lakṣmī in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XLII—the *Dhyānam* and *Stotra* of Mahā-Lakṣmī

1-50. Nārada said: "O Bhagavān! I have heard about the glories of Hari, about the *tattva-jñāṇam* (the true knowledge) and the story of Lakṣmī. Now tell me Her *dhyānam* (meditation) and *stotram* (recitation of hymns)."

Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! Indra then, bathed first in the *tīrtha* (holy place) and, wearing a clean cloth, installed first of all, an earthen jar (*ghata*) on the beach of the Kṣīroda Ocean. Then he worshipped with devotion the six Deities—Gaṇeśa, Sūrya, Fire, Viṣṇu, Śiva, and Śivā—with scents and flowers. Next Indra invoked Mahā-Lakṣmī, of the nature of the highest powers and greatest prosperity, and began to worship Her as Brahmā, who was acting as an officiating priest in the presence of the Munis, Brāhmaṇas,

Bṛhaspati, Hari and the other Devas, had dictated to him. He first smeared one Pārijāta flower with sandalwood paste and reciting the meditation *mantra* of Mahā-Lakṣmī, offered it to Her feet. The meditation *mantra* that was recited by Devendra, was what Bhagavān Hari first gave to Brahmā. I am now telling you that. Listen.

> "O Mother! Thou residest on the thousand-petalled lotus. The beauty of Thy face excels the beauty of *koti* autumnal full Moons. Thou art shining with Thy own splendor. Thou art very beautiful and lovely; Thy color is like the burnished gold; Thou art with form, chaste, ornamented all over with jeweled ornaments; Thou art wearing the yellow cloth and look! what beauty is coming out of it! Always a sweet smile reigns on Thy lips. Thy beauty is constant; Thou art the bestower of prosperity to all. O Mahā-Lakṣmī! I meditate on Thee."

Thus meditating on Her, endowed with various attributes, with this *mantra*, Indra worshipped devotedly with sixteen *upachāras* (articles offered). Every *upachāra* (article) was offered with the repetition of *mantra*. All the things were very excellent, right and commendable. "O Mahā-Lakṣmī! Viśvakarmā has made this invaluable *āsana* (a carpet seat) wonderfully decked with jewels; I am offering this *āsana* to Thee. Please accept. O Thou residing in the lotus! This holy Ganges water is considered with great regard and desired by all. This is like the fire to burn the fuel in the shape of the sins of the sinners. O Thou! The dweller in the Lotus! This *dūrbha* grass, flowers, this *arghya* (offering) of the Ganges water perfumed with sandalwood paste, I am offering to Thee. Please accept. O beloved of Hari! This sweet-scented flower oil and this sweet-scented *āmalaki* fruit lead to the beauty of the body; therefore I present this to Thee. Please accept. O Devī! I am presenting this cloth made of silk to Thee; please accept. O Devī! This excellent ornament made of gold and jewels, which increases the beauty, I am presenting to Thee. Pleaseaccept. O beloved of Kṛṣṇa! I am presenting this sweet-scented holy *dhūpa* prepared from various herbs and plants, exquisitely nice and the root of all beauty, to Thee. Please accept.

This sweet-scented, pleasant sandalwood paste I offer to Thee, O Devī! Please accept. O ruler of the Devas! I present this pleasing holy *dīpa* (ghee lamp) which is the eye of this world and by which all the darkness is vanished; please accept. O Devī! I present to Thee these very delicious offerings of fruits, etc., very juicy and of various kinds. Please accept. O Deveśī! This *anna* (food) is Brahman, and the chief means to preserve the life of living beings. By this the nourishment of the body and the mental satisfaction are effected. Therefore I am presenting this food to Thee. Please accept. O Mahā-Lakṣmī! I am presenting this most delicious *paramānna*, which is prepared out of rice, milk and sugar, to Thee. Please accept. O Devī! I am presenting this most delicious and pleasant *svastika* prepared of sugar and clarified butter to Thee; please accept. O beloved of Achyuta! I am presenting to Thee various beautiful *pakkānnas*, ripe delicious fruits and clarified butter from cow's milk; please accept. O Devī! The sugarcane juice, when heated, yields a syrup which again heated yields very delicious and nice thing called *gur* (unprocessed sugar). I am presenting this *gur* to Thee; please accept. O Devī! I am presenting to Thee the sweetmeats prepared out of the flour of *yava* and wheat and *gur* and ghee; please accept. I am presenting with devotion the offering made of *svastika* and the flour of other grains; please accept. O Kāmale! I am presenting to Thee this fan and white *chāmara*, which blows cool air and is very pleasant when this body gets hot; please accept. O Devī! I am presenting this betel scented with camphor by which the inertness of the tongue is removed; please accept. O Devī! I am presenting this scented cool water, which will allay the thirst and which is known as the life of this world; please accept. O Devī! I am presenting this cloth made of cotton and silk that increases the beauty and splendor of the body. Please accept. O Devī! I am presenting to Thee ornaments made of gold and jewels which are the source of beauty and loveliness. Please accept. O Devī! I am presenting to Thee these pure garlands of flowers which blossom in different seasons, which look very beautiful and which give satisfaction to the Devas and to the kings. Please accept. O Devī! I am presenting to Thee this nice scent, this very holy thing to Thee by which both the body and mind become pure, which is most auspicious and which is prepared of many fragrant herbs and plants;

please accept. O beloved of the God Kṛṣṇa! I am presenting this *ācamanaīya* water to Thee for rinsing the mouth, pure and holy, and brought from holy places of pilgrimage; please accept. O Devī! I am presenting to Thee, this bed made of excellent gems and jewels and flowers, sandalwood paste, clothings and ornaments; please accept. O Devī! I am presenting to Thee all those things that are extraordinary, very rare in this earth and fit to be enjoyed by the Devas and worthy of their ornaments; please accept."

O Devaṛṣi! Uttering those *mantras*, the Devendra offered those articles with intense devotion according to the rules. He, then, made *japam* of the *mūla-mantra* radical seed-*mantra*) ten *lakhs* of times. His *mantra* revealed the Deity thereof and thus came to a successful issue. The lotus-born Brahmā gave this *mantra:* ***śrīṁ hṛīṁ klīṁ aiṁ kāmalāvāsinyai svāhā*** to Devendra. This is like a *kalpa-vṛksa* (the tree in Indra's garden yielding whatever may be desired). This *Vaidik mantra* is the chief of the *mantras*. The word *svāhā* is at the end of the *mantra*. By virtue of this *mantra*, Kuvera got his highest prosperity. By the power of this *mantra*, the King-Emperor Dakṣa Sāvarni Manu and Maṅgala became the lords of the earth with seven islands. Priyavrata, Uttānapāda, and Kedārarāja all these became *siddhas* (were fructified with success) and became King-Emperors. O Nārada! When Indra attained success in this *mantra*, there appeared before him Mahā-Lakṣmī, seated in the celestial car, decked with excellent gems and jewels. The great effulgence, coming out of Her body made maṇifest the earth with seven islands. Her color was white like the white *campaka* flower, and Her whole body was decked with ornaments. Her face was always gracious and cheerful with sweet smiles. She was ever ready to show Her kindness to the *bhaktas*. On Her neck there was a garland of jewels and gems, bright as ten million Moons. O Devaṛṣi! No sooner did Indra see that World Mother Mahā-Lakṣmī, of a peaceful appearance, than his body was filled with joy and the hairs of the body stood on end. His eyes were filled with tears; and with folded palms, he began to recite *stotras* to Her, the *Vaidik stotras* yielding all desires, that were communicated to him by Brahmā.

51-75. Indra said: "O Thou, the dweller in the lotus! O Nārāyaṇī! O dear to Kṛṣṇa! O Padmāsane! O Mahā-Lakṣmī! Obeisance to Thee! O Padmadalekṣane! O Padmaṇibhānane! O Padmāsane! O Padme! O Vaiṣṇavī! Obeisance to Thee! Thou art the wealth of all; Thou art worshipped by all; Thou bestowest to all the bliss and devotion to Śrī Hari. I bow down to Thee. O Devī! Thou always dwellest on the breast of Kṛṣṇa and exercisest Thy powers over Him. Thou art the beauty of the Moon; Thou takest Thy seat on the beautiful jewel lotus. Obeisance to Thee! O Devī! Thou art the presiding Deity of riches; Thou art the great Devī; Thou increasest always Thy gifts and Thou art the bestower of increments. So I bow down to Thee. O Devī! Thou art the Mahā-Lakṣmī of Vaikuṇṭha, the Lakṣmī of the Kṣīroda Ocean; Thou art Indra's Heavenly Lakṣmī; Thou art the Rāja Lakṣmī of the Kings; Thou art the Gṛha Lakṣmī of the householders; Thou art the household Deity of them; Thou art the Surabhī, born of the Ocean; Thou art the Dakśiṇā, the wife of the sacrifices; Thou art Aditi, the Mother of the Devas; Thou art Kāmalā, always dwelling in the Lotus; Thou art Svāhā, in the offerings with clarified butter in the sacrificial ceremonies; Thou art the Svadhā *mantra* in the *kāvyas* (an offering of food to deceased ancestors). So obeisance to Thee! O Mother, Thou art of the nature of Viṣṇu; Thou art the Earth that supports all; Thou art of pure *śuddha-sattva,* and Thou art devoted to Nārāyaṇa. Thou art void of anger and jealousy. Rather Thou grantest boons to all. Thou art the auspicious Sāradā; Thou grantest the highest Reality and the devotional service to Hari. Without Thee all the worlds are quite stale, to no purpose like ashes, always dead while existing. Thou art the chief Mother, the chief friend of all; Thou art the source of *dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa!* As a mother nourishes her infants with the milk of her breasts, so Thou nourishest all as their mother! A child that sucks the milk might be saved by *daiva* (fate), when deprived of its mother; but men can never be saved if they be bereft of Thee! O Mother! Thou art always gracious. Please be gracious unto me. O eternal one! My possessions are now in the hands of the enemies. Be kind enough to restore my kingdoms to me from my enemies' hands. O beloved of Hari! Since Thou hast forsaken me, I am wandering abroad,

friendless, like a beggar, deprived of all prosperity. O Devī! Give me *jñāṇam, dharma*, my desired fortune, power, influence and my possessions."

O Nārada! Indra and all the other Devas bowed down frequently to Mahā-Lakṣmī with their eyes filled with tears. Brahmā, Śaṅkara, Ananta Deva, Dharma and Keśava all asked pardon again and again from Mahā-Lakṣmī. Lakṣmī then granted boons to the Devas, and before the assembly gladly gave the garland of flowers on the neck of Keśava. The Devas, satisfied, went back to their own places. The Devilakṣmī, too, becoming very glad went to Śrī Hari sleeping in the Kṣīroda Ocean. Brahmā and Maheśvara both became very glad, and blessing the Devas, went respectively to their own abodes. Whoever recites this holy *stotra* three times a day, becomes the King Emperor and gets prosperity and wealth like the God Kuvera. *Siddhi* (success) comes to him who recites this *stotra* five *lakhs* times. If anybody reads regularly and always this *siddha-stotra* for one month, he becomes very happy and he turns out a Rājarājendra."

Here ends the Forty-second Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the Dhyānam and Stotra of Mahā-Lakṣmī in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XLIII—the History of Svāhā

1-4. Nārada said: "O Ṛṣi Nārāyaṇa! O highly fortunate One! O Lord! Thou art equal to Nārāyaṇa whether in beauty or in qualities, or in fame or in energy or in everything. Thou art equal to Nārāyaṇa. Thou art the foremost of the *jñānins;* there cannot be found a second like Thee as a *siddha-yogī* among the ascetics and the Munis. And Thou art the crest of the knowers of the *Vedas*. I have heard the wonderful anecdote of Mahā-Lakṣmī that Thou hast told me. Now tell me any other thing that is unknown, very good in every way, in accordance with *dharma*, in the *Vedas*, and that which is not as yet written in the *Purāṇas*."

5-6. Nārāyaṇa said: "There are many wonderful hidden anecdotes that are not published as yet in the *Purāṇas*. What you have heard is very small in

fact. Please mention to me what you like to hear, what you think as best amongst them and I will describe that to you."

7-8. Nārada said: "When clarified butter is poured as libations in all the sacrificial ceremonies to the gods, 'Svāhā' is to be uttered everywhere as excellent, and commendable; so 'Svadhā' is to be repeated in the offerings when the oblations are offered to the Pitṛs, the deceased ancestors. Then, again, *dakśiṇā* (the sacrificial fee) is always to be paid as right and excellent. So, O knower of the *Vedas!* I like to hear the accounts of Svāhā, Svadhā and Dakśiṇā, and their merits. Please now tell me about them."

9. Sūta said: "Hearing the words of Nārada, Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi smiled and began to speak the very ancient words of the *Purāṇas*."

10-11. Nārāyaṇa said: "Before the creation, the Devas assembled in the beautiful Brahmā's council to decide on their food question. They all brought to the notice of Brahmā the scarcity of their food. Brahmā promised to remove their food difficulties and began to chant hymns to Hari."

12. Nārada said: "O Lord! Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa Himself incarnated in part as sacrifice. Are not the Devas satisfied when the Brāhmaṇas pour oblations of ghee to the Devas in those sacrifices?"

13-17. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Muni! The Devas, in fact, did not get the offerings of the clarified butter that were poured in with devotion in sacrificial acts by the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas. So they were very much depressed and went again to the council of Brahmā and informed Him that they could not get any food for themselves. On hearing this, Brahmā at once meditated and took refuge of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; Kṛṣṇa advised them to worship Mūla-Prakṛti. Brahmā then, by the command of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, began to meditate on Prakṛti, worship Her and chant hymns to Her. Then from the part of Prakṛti, an all-powerful Devī appeared. She was very beautiful, *śyāmā* (of a dark blue color) and very lovely. This Devī was Svāhā. She looked always gracious with smile in Her face; it seemed that She was always ready to show favor

towards the *bhaktas*. She appeared before Brahmā and said: 'O lotus-born! Ask any boon you desire.'

18-22. Hearing Her words, the creator spoke reverentially: "O Devī! Let Thou be the burning power of fire; without Thee, fire would not be able to burn anything. At the conclusion of any *mantra*, whoever taking Thy name, will pour oblations in the sacrificial fire to the Gods, will cause those oblations to go to the Gods and reach them. And then they will be very glad. O Mother! Let Thou be the wealth of fire, the beauty and housewife of fire; let Thou be incessantly worshipped in the regions of the Gods and amongst men and other beings.' Hearing these words of Brahmā, Svāhā Devī became very sad and expressed Her own intentions: 'I will get Kṛṣṇa as My husband; let me perform *tapasyā* as long as it takes. This is my object. All other things are false as dreams.

23-28. I always meditate with devotion on the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, serving Which You have become the creator of this world, Śambhu has become the conqueror of death, Ananta Deva is supporting this universe, Dharma is the witness of the virtuous, Gaṇeśa is getting, first of all, the first worship. Prakṛti-Devī has become the adorable of all and the Munis and the Ṛṣis respected by all.'

O Child! Having spoken thus to the Lotus-born, Padmā, with Her lotus-face, meditating incessantly on the Lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, free from any disease, started to perform *tapasyā* for attaining Him. She, first of all, stood on one leg and practiced austerities for one *lakh* years. Then She saw the highest *puruṣa* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is beyond Prakṛti and Her attributes. The beautiful amorous Svāhā, seeing the lovely form of the Lord of love, fainted.

29-43. The omniscient Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa knowing Her intentions, took Her to His lap, reduced very much in body by long-continued *tapasyā*, and He said: 'O Devī! Thou shalt be My wife in the next Varāha-*kalpa*. Then Thou wilt be the daughter of Nagnajit and wilt be known by the name of Nāgnajitī. O beloved! At present let Thou be the energy of fire and be His

wife. By My boon Thou wilt be worshipped by all. Fire will make Thee the Lady of His house, and take the utmost care of Thee. Thou wilt be able to enjoy easily with Him.'

O Nārada! Thus saying to Svāhā, Bhagavān disappeared. On the other hand, fire came in there by the command of Brahmā, with a doubtful mind and began to meditate on Her, the world Mother as per *Sāma-Veda* and worshipped Her. He then pleased and married Her with *mantrams*, etc. For one hundred divine years they enjoyed each other. In a very solitary place while they were enjoying each other, Svāhā Devī felt pregnant. For full twelve divine years She retained Her pregnancy. Then She delivered gradually three sons: Dakśiṇāgni, Gārhyapatyāgnī, and Āhavanīyāgni. The Ṛṣis, Munis, Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas poured oblations of clarified butter, pronouncing the terminal *mantra* 'Svahā.' He who pronounces this excellent terminal *mantra* 'Svāhā' gets immediate success in his actions. Then all the *mantras* without 'Svāhā' in the end became impotent as snakes become when void of poison, the Brāhmaṇas when they are devoid of the knowledge of the *Vedas*, the wife when she does not serve her husband, the men when they turn illiterate and the trees, when void of fruits and branches. O child! The Brāhmaṇas then became satisfied. The Devas began to receive the oblations. With the Svāhā-*mantra* everything turned out fruitful. Thus I have described to you the anecdote of *svāhā*. One who hears this essential anecdote gets his happiness enhanced and *mokṣa* in his hands. What more do you want to hear ? Say."

44. Nārada said: "I like to hear how fire worshipped Svāhā and recited *stotras* (hymns of praise) to Her. Kindly tell me the method of worship, the *dhyānam* and *stotra*."

45-49. Nārāyaṇa said: "O best of Brāhmaṇas! I now tell you the meditation (*dhyānam*) as per *Sāma-Veda*, the method of worship and *stotra*. Listen attentively. At the commencement of any sacrificial ceremony, one should first of all worship, whether on the *śālagrāma* stone or in an earthen jar (*ghata*), the Devī Svāhā and then commence the ceremony with the

expectation of getting the desired fruit. The following is the *dhyānam* (meditation) of Svāhā Devī:

> O Devī Svāhā! Thou art embodied of the *mantras;* Thou art the success of the *mantras;* Thou art Thyself a *siddhā;* Thou givest success and the fruits of actions to men; Thou dost good to all."

Thus meditating, one should offer *pādya* (water for washing the feet), etc., uttering the basic *mantra;* success then comes to him.

Now hear about the radical seed-*mantra*. The said *mūla-mantra* is this: ***Āūṁ̊ hṛīṁ śrīṁ vahnijāyāyai devyai svāhā.*** If the Devī be worshipped with this *mantra*, all the desires come to a successful issue.

50-54. Fire recited the following *stotra:* "Thou art Svāhā, Thou art the Beloved of Fire, Thou art the wife of Fire; Thou pleasest all; Thou art the Śakti, Thou art the action, Thou art the bestower of *kāla* (time); Thou dost digest the food; Thou art the *dhruvā* (center); Thou art the resort of men; Thou art the burning power; Thou canst burn everything, Thou art the essence of this world; Thou art the deliverer from the terrible world; Thou art the life of the gods and Thou nourishest the Gods."

O Nārada! He who reads with devotion these sixteen names, gets success both in this world as well as in the next. None of his works become deficient in any way; rather all the works are performed successfully and with a successful issue. Reading this *stotra*, one who has no wife, gets wife. So much so that the man who recites the *stotra* gets for his wife equal to Rambhā, the heavenly nymph, and passes his time in greatest bliss.

Here ends the Forty-third Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the history of Svāhā in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the Mahā-Purāṇam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XLIV—the Story of Svadhā Devī

1-18. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! I will tell you now the excellent anecdote of Svadhā, pleasing to the Pitṛs and enhancing the fruits of the *śrāddha* ceremony when foods are offered to the Pitṛs. Listen. Before the creation, the creator created seven Pitṛs. Four out of them are with forms and the other three are of the nature of *teja* (light).

Note: Kavyavāhoanalaḥ, Somo, Yamaschaivāryamā tathā, Agṇisvāttāh, Barhisadaḥ, Somapā, Pitri Devatāḥ. These seven Pitṛs are according to the other Purāṇas. Seeing the beautiful and lovely forms of the Pitṛs, He made arrangements for their food in the form of *śrāddha* and *tarpana*, etc. (funeral ceremony and peace-offerings), etc. (*śrāddha*, solemn obsequies performed in honor of the manes of deceased ancestors.)

Taking bath, performing *śrāddha* ceremony up to *tarpaṇam* (peace-offerings), worshipping the Devas and doing *sandhyā* thrice a day; these are the daily duties of the Brāhmaṇas. If any Brāhmaṇa does not perform daily the *trisandhyās*, *śrāddha*, *tarpaṇam*, worship and reciting the Vedas, he becomes devoid of fire like a snake without any poison. He who does not perform the devotional service of the Devī, who eats food not offered to Śrī Hari, who remains impure until death, is not entitled to do any *karma* whatsoever.

Thus introducing the *śrāddhas*, etc., for the Pitṛs, Brahmā went to His own abode. The Brāhmaṇas went on doing the *śrāddhas* for the Pitṛs, but the Pitṛs could not enjoy them and so they remained without food and were not satisfied. They all, being hungry and sad, went to the council of Brahmā and informed Him everything from beginning to end. Brahmā then created out of His mind one daughter very beautiful, full of youth and having a face as lovely as one hundred moons. That woman was best in all respects whether in form, beauty, qualities or in learning. Her color was white like the white *campaka* flower, and her body was adorned all over with jeweled ornaments. This form was very pure, ready to grant boons, auspicious and the part of Prakṛti. Her face was beaming with smiles; her teeth were very

beautiful and her body showed signs of Lakṣmī (i.e., of wealth and prosperity). Her name was Svadhā. Her lotus feet were situated on one hundred lotuses. She was the wife of the Pitṛs. Her face resembled that of a lotus and Her eyes looked like water-lilies. She was born of the lotus-born Brahmā. The Grandfather Brahmā made over that daughter of the nature of *tuṣṭi* (contentment) to the hands of the Pitṛs and they were satisfied.

Brahmā advised the Brāhmaṇas privately that whenever they would offer anything to the Pitṛs, they should offer duly with the *mantra* 'Svadhā' pronounced at the end. Since then the Brāhmaṇas are offering everything to the Pitṛs with the *mantra* Svadhā uttered in the end. Svāhā is laudable when offerings are presented to the Gods, and Svadhā is commendable when offerings are made to the Pitṛs. But in both cases, *dakśiṇā* is essential. Without *dakśiṇā* (sacrificial fee), all sacrifices are useless and worthless. The Pitṛs, Devatās, Brāhmaṇas, the Munis and Manus worshipped the peaceful Svadhā and chanted hymns to Her with great love. The Devas, Pitṛs, Brāhmaṇas, all were pleased and felt their ends achieved when they got the boon from Svadhā Devī. Thus I have told you everything about Svadhā. It is pleasing to all. What more do you want to hear? Say. I will answer all your questions."

19. Nārada said: "O Thou, the best of the knowers of the *Vedas!* O Muni Sattama! I want now to hear the method of worship, the meditation and the hymns of Svadhā Devī. Kindly tell me all about this."

20-27. Nārāyaṇa said: "You know everything about the all-auspicious *dhyāna* and *stotra* as stated in the *Vedas;* then why do you ask Me again? However I will speak out this for the enhancement of knowledge. On the thirteenth day of the dark fortnight in autumn when the Maghā asterism is with the Moon and on the *śrāddha* day, one should worship with care Svadhā Devī; then one should perform *śrāddha*. If, out of vanity, a Brāhmaṇa performs *śrāddha* without first worshipping Svadhā Devī then he will never get the fruits of *tarpaṇam* or *śrāddha*.

"O Devī Svadhe! Thou art the mind-born daughter of Brahmā, always young and worshipped by the Pitṛs. Thou bestowest the fruits of *śrāddha*. So I meditate on Thee." Thus meditating, the Brāhmaṇa is to pronounce the *mūla-mantra* and offer the Pādyam, etc., to the *śālagrāma* stone or on the auspicious earthen jar. This is the ruling of the *Vedas*. The *mūla-mantra* is ***Āūṁ hṛīṁ śrīṁ klīṁ svadhā-devyai svāhā***. She should be worshipped with this *mantra*. After reciting hymns to the Devī, one is to bow down to the Svadhā Devī. O son of Brahmā! O best of Munis! O skilled in hearing! I now describe the *stotra* which Brahmā composed at the beginning for the bestowal of the desired fruits to mankind. Listen.

Nārāyaṇa said: "The instant the *mantra* Svadhā is pronounced, men get at once the fruits of bathing in the holy places of pilgrimages. No trace of sin exists in him at that time; rather, the religious merits of performing the Vājapeya sacrifice accrue to him.

28-36. "Svadhā, Svadhā, Svadhā," thrice this word if one calls to mind, one gets the fruits of *śrāddha, tarpaṇam* and *bali* (offering sacrifices). So much so, if one hears with devotion during the *śrāddha* time the recitation of the hymn to Svadhā, one gets, no doubt, the fruit of *śrāddha*. If one recites the Svadhā *mantra* thrice daily in the morning, midday and evening, one gets an obedient, chaste wife begetting sons. The following is the *stotra* to Svadhā:

> "O Devī Svadhe! Thou art dear to the Pitṛs as their vital breaths and thou art the lives of the Brāhmaṇas. Thou art the presiding Deity of the *śrāddha* ceremonies and bestowest the fruits thereof. O Thou of good vows! Thou art eternal, true, and of the nature of religious merits. Thou appearest in creation and disappearest in dissolution. And this appearing and disappearing go on forever. Thou art *Āūṁ*, thou art Svasti, Thou art *namaskāra* (salutation); Thou art Svadhā, Thou art Dakśiṇā, Thou art the various works as designated in the *Vedas*. These the Lord of the world has created for the success of action (*karma*)."

No sooner Brahmā, seated in His assembly in the Brahmā-loka, reciting this *stotra* remained silent, than Svadhā Devī appeared there all at once. When Brahmā handed over the lotus-faced Svadhā Devī over to the hands of the Pitṛs, and they gladly took Her to their own abodes. He who hears with devotion and attention this *stotra* of Svadhā, gets all sorts of rich fruits that are desired and the fruits of bathing in all the *tīrthas*."

Here ends the Forty-fourth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the story of Svadhā Devī in the discourse between Nārada and Nārāyaṇa in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XLV—the Anecdote of Dakśiṇā

1-63. Nārāyaṇa said: "The excellent, most sweet stories of Svāhā and Svadhā are told; now I will tell you the story of Dakśiṇā; hear attentively. In early days, in the region of Goloka, there was a good-natured *gopī* named Suśīlā; beautiful, Rādhā's companion and very dear to Śrī Hari. She was fortunate, respected, beautiful, lovely, prosperous, with good teeth, learned, well-qualified and of exquisitely handsome form. Her whole body was tender and lovely like Kalāvatī (one versed in 64 arts; moon). She was beautiful and her eyes were like water lilies. Her hips were good and spacious; Her breasts were full; she was Śyāmā (a kind of woman having color like melted gold; body being hot in cold and cool in summer; of youthful beauty); as well She was of the *nyagrodha* class of women (an excellent woman). Always a smile sweetened Her face; and that looked always gracious. Her whole body was covered with jeweled ornaments. Her color was white like the white *campakas*. Her lips were red like *bimba* fruits; Her eyes were like those of a deer. Suśīlā was very clever in amorous sciences. Her gait was like a swan. She was specially versed in what is called *prema-bhakti* (love towards God). So She was the dearest lady of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. And She was of intense emotional feelings. She knows all the sentiments of love; she was witty, humorous, and ardent for the love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the *rāsa* circle. She sat by the left side of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the presence of Rādhā. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then cast His glance on Rādhā, the chief of

the *gopīs* and hung down His head through fear. Rādhā's face turned red; the two eyes looked like red lilies; Her body began to quiver out of anger and Her lips began to shake. Seeing that state of Rādhā, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa disappeared, fearing that a quarrel might ensue. Suśīlā and other *gopīs* seeing that the peaceful Kṛṣṇa of *sattvā-guṇa* and of lovely form had disappeared, began to tremble with fear. Then one *lakh koti gopīs,* seeing Kṛṣṇa absent and Rādhā angry, became very much afraid, and bowing their heads down with devotion and with folded palms began to say frequently, "Rādhe! Protect us, protect us," and they took shelter at Her feet.

O Nārada! Three *lakh gopas* also including Sudāmā and others took shelter at the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā out of fear. Seeing Kṛṣṇa absent and Her companion Suśīlā running away, Rādhā cursed her thus: "If Suśīlā comes again to this Goloka, she will be reduced to ashes." Thus cursing Her companion Suśīlā out of anger, Rādhā, the darling of the Deva of the Devas and the Lady of the *rāsa* circle, went to the *rāsa* circle and called on Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the same. Not being able to find out Śrī Kṛṣṇa, a minute appeared a *yuga* to Her and she began to say: "O Lord of *prāṇas!* O dearer than My life! O presiding Deity of my life! O Kṛṣṇa! My life seems to depart from Thy absence! Come quickly and show Thyself to Me. O Lord! It is through the favor of one's husband that the pride of women gets increased day-by-day. Women's safeguards of happiness are their husbands. Therefore women, who are helpless creatures, ought always to serve their husbands according to *dharma*. The husband is the wife's friend, presiding deity and the sole refuge and the chief wealth. It is through husbands that women derive their pleasures, enjoyments, *dharma*, happiness, peace and contentment. If husbands are respected, wives are respected and if husbands are dishonored, women are dishonored too. The husband is the highest thing to a woman. He is the highest friend. There is no better friend than him. The husband is called *bhartā* because he supports his wife; he is called *pati*, because he preserves her; he is called *svāmī*, because he is the master of her body; he is called *kāntā* because he bestows the desired things to her; he is called *bandhu*, because he increases her happiness; he is called *priya*, because he gives pleasure to her; he is called *iśa*, because he bestows

prosperity on her; he is called *prāneśvara*, because he is the lord of her *prāṇa;* and he is called *ramana*, because he gives enjoyment to her. There is no other thing dearer than husband. The son is born of the husband; hence the son is so dear. The husband is dearer to a family woman than one hundred sons. Those who are born in impure families cannot know what substance a husband is made up of. Taking baths in all the *tīrthas*, giving *dakśiṇā* in all the *yajñas* (sacrifices), circumambulating round the whole earth, performing all austerities, observing all vows, making all great gifts, holy fastings, all that are dictated in the *śāstras*, serving the *guru*, the Brāhmaṇas and the Devas all cannot compare to even one sixteenth part with serving faithfully the feet of the husband. The husband is the highest; higher than the *guru*, higher than the Brāhmaṇas, higher than all the Devas. As to man, the spiritual teacher who imparts the spiritual knowledge is the best and supreme, so to the women their husbands are the best of all. Oh! I am not able to realize the glory of my dearest, by Whose favor I am the sole ruler of one *lakh koti gopīs*, one *lakh koti gopas*, innumerable *brahmandas*, and all the things thereof, and all the *lokas* (regions) from *bhu* (earth) to Goloka. Oh! The womanly nature is insurmountable." Thus saying, Rādhikā began to meditate with devotion on Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Tears began to flow incessantly from Her eyes. She exclaimed, "O Lord! O Lord! O ramana! Show Thyself to me. I am very much weak and distressed from Thy bereavement."

Now the Dakśiṇā Devī, driven out from Goloka; practiced *tapasyā* for a long time when She entered into the body of Kāmalā. The Devas, on the other hand, performed a very difficult *yajña;* but they could not derive any fruit therefrom. So they went to Brahmā, becoming very sad. Hearing them, Brahmā meditated on Viṣṇu for a long time with devotion. At last Viṣṇu gave him a reply. Viṣṇu got out of the body of Mahā-Lakṣmī a Martya-Lakṣmī (Lakṣmī of the earth) and gave Her as *dakśiṇā* to Brahmā.Then with a view to yield her to the Devas as a fruit of their *karmas*, Brahmā made over to the Yajña Deva (the Deva presiding the sacrifice) the Devī Dakśiṇā, offered by Nārāyaṇa. Yajña Deva then worshipped Her duly and recited hymns to Her with great joy. Her color was like melted gold; her luster equalled *koti* Moons; very lovely, beautiful, fascinating; face resembling

water lilies, of a gentle body; with eyes like Padmā Palāsa, born of the body of Lakṣmī, worshipped by Brahmā, wearing celestial silken garments, her lips resembling *bimba* fruits, chaste, handsome; her braid of hair surrounded by *mālatī* garlands; with a sweet smiling face, ornamented with jeweled ornaments, well dressed, bathed, enchanting the minds of the Munis, below the hair of her forehead the dot of musk and *sindūra* scented with sandalwood paste, of spacious hips, with full breasts, smitten by the arrows of Kāma Deva (the God of Love).

Such was the Dakśiṇā Devī. Seeing Her, the Yajña Deva fainted. At last he married her according to due rites and ceremonies. Taking her to a solitary place, he enjoyed her for full divine one hundred years with great joy like Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa. Gradually then Dakśiṇā became pregnant. She remained so for twelve divine years. Then she duly delivered a nice son as the fruit of *karma*. When any *karma* becomes complete, this son delivers the fruits of that *karma*. Yajña Deva with His wife Dakśiṇā and the above named *karma-phala*, the bestower of the fruits of actions gives the desired fruits to all their sacrificial acts and *karmas*. So the Paṇḍitas, the knowers of the *Vedas*, say. Really he, henceforth, began to give fruits to all the persons of their acts, with his wife Dakśiṇā and son, the bestower of the fruits of the actions. The Devas were all satisfied at this and went away respectively to their own abodes.

Therefore, the man who performs *karmas*, generally known as *karma-kartas*, should pay the *dakśiṇā* (sacrificial fee) and so he completes at once his actions. It is stated in the *Vedas* that no sooner the *karma-karta* pays the *dakśiṇā*, then he obtains the fruits of his *karmas* at once. In case the *karma-karta*, after he has completed his acts, does not pay either through bad luck or through ignorance, any *dakśiṇā* to the Brāhmaṇas, its amount is doubled. If a *muhūrta* passes away and if one night elapses, its amount is increased one hundred times. If three nights pass away and the *dakśiṇā* not paid, the amount last brought forward is increased again a hundred times; if a week passes, the last amount is doubled, and if one month passes away, the

dakśiṇā is multiplied one *lakh* times. If one year passes away, that is increased to ten millions of times and the *karma*, also, bears no fruit.

Such a *karma-karta* is known as taking away unfairly a Brāhmaṇa's property and is regarded as impure. He has no right to any further actions. For that sin, he becomes a pauper and diseased. Lakṣmī Devī goes away from his house, leaves him, cursing him severely. So much so that the Pitṛs do not accept the *śrāddha* and *tarpaṇam* offered by that wretched fellow. So the Devas do not accept his worship, nor the Fire accept the oblations poured by him. If the person that performs sacrifices does not pay the sacrificial fee that he resolves to pay and he who accepts the offer does not demand the sum, both of them go to hell. But if the performer of the sacrifices does not pay when the priests demand the fee, then the *yajamāna* (the performer of the sacrifices) only falls down to hell as the jar, severed from the rope, falls down. The *yajamāna* (pupil) is denominated as a *brahmāsvapahārī* (one who robs a Brāhmaṇa's property); he goes ultimately to the Kumbhīpāka hell. There he remains for one *lakh* years, punished and threatened by Yama's messengers. He is then reborn as a *caṇḍāla*, poor and diseased. So much so that his seven generations above and his seven generations below go to hell.

64-65. O Nārada! Thus I have narrated to you the story of Dakśiṇā. What more do you want to hear? Say."

Nārada said: "O Best of Munis! Who bears the fruits of that *karma* where no *dakśiṇā* is paid? Describe the method of worship that was offered to Dakśiṇā by Yajña Deva."

Nārāyaṇa said: "Where do you find the fruit of any sacrifice without *dakśiṇā?* (i.e., nowhere.) That *karma* only gets fruits where *dakśiṇās* are paid. And the fruits of the acts void of any *dakśiṇā*, Bali who lives in the Pātāla only enjoys; and no one else.

66-71. For, in olden times, it was ordained by Vāmana Deva that those fruits would go to the king Bali. All those that pertain to *śrāddha* not

sanctioned by the *Vedas*, the charities made without any regard or faith, the worship offered by a Brāhmaṇa who is the husband of a *vrisala* (an unmarried girl twelve years in whom menstruation has commenced), the fruits of sacrifices done by an impure Brāhmaṇa (a Brāhmaṇa who fails in his duties), the worship offered by impure persons, and the acts of a man devoid of any devotion to his *guru*, all these are reserved for the king Bali. He enjoys the fruits of all these.

O child! I am now telling you the *dhyāna, stotra*, and the method of worship of Dakśiṇā Devī as per *Kanva-śākhā*. Hear. When Yajña Deva in ancient times got Dakśiṇā, skillful in action, he was very much fascinated by her appearance and being love-stricken, began to praise her: "O Beautiful One! You were before the chief of the *gopīs* in Goloka. You were like Rādhā; you were Her companion; and you were loved by Srī Rādhā, the beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

72-97. In the *rāsa* circle, on the full Moon night in the month of Kārtik, in the great festival of Rādhā, you appeared from the right shoulder of Lakṣmī; hence you were named Dakśiṇā. O beautiful One! You were of good nature before; hence your name was Suśīlā. Next you turned due to Rādhā's curse, into Dakśiṇā. It is to my great good luck that you were dislodged from Goloka and have come here. O highly fortunate One! Now have mercy on me and accept me as your husband. O Devī! You give to all the doers of actions the fruits of their works. Without you, their *karmas* bear no fruit. So much so, if you be not present in their action the works never shine forth in brilliant glory. Without Thee, neither Brahmā, nor Viṣṇu nor Maheśa nor the Regents of the quarters, the ten Dikpālas, can award the fruits of actions. Brahmā is *karma* incarnate. Maheśvara is the incarnation of the fruits of *karmas;* and I, Viṣṇu myself is the incarnation of *yajñas*. But Thou art the essence of all. Thou art the Parā-Prakṛti, without any attributes, the Parā-Brahman incarnate, the bestower of the fruits of action. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot award the fruits of actions without Thee. O Beloved! In every birth let Thou be my Śakti. O Thou with excellent face! Without Thee, I am unable to finish well any *karma*."

O Nārada! Thus praising Dakśiṇā Devī, Yajña Deva stood before Her. She, born from the shoulder of Lakṣmī, became pleased with His *stotra* and accepted Him for Her bridegroom. If anybody recites this Dakśiṇā stotra during sacrifice, he gets all the results thereof.

If anybody recites this stotra in the Rājasūya sacrifice, Vājapaya, Gomedha (cow sacrifice) Naramedha (man sacrifice), Aśvamedha (horse sacrifice), Lāngala Sacrifice, Viṣṇu Yajña tending to increase one's fame, in the act of giving over wealth or pieces of lands, digging tanks or wells, or giving fruits, in Gajamedha (elephant sacrifice), in Loha Yajña (iron sacrifice), Svarṇa Yajña (gold sacrifice), Ratna Yajña (making over jewels in sacrifices), Tāmra Yajña (copper), Śiva Yajña, Rudra Yajña, Śakra Yajña, Bandhuka Yajña, Varuṇa Yajña (for rains), Kandaka Yajña, for crushing the enemies, Śuchi Yajña, Dharma Yajña, Pāpa-mochana Yajña, Brahmānī Karma Yajña, or the auspicious Prakṛti Yāga sacrifices, his work is achieved then without any hitch or obstacle. There is no doubt about this.

The *stotra* thus, is mentioned now; hear about the *dhyānam* and the method of worship. First of all, one should worship Dakśiṇā Devī in the *śālagrāma* stone, or in an earthen jar (*ghata*). The *dhyānam* runs thus:

> "O Dakśiṇā! Thou art sprung from the right shoulder of Lakṣmī; Thou art a part of Kāmalā; Thou art clever (Dakṣa) in all the actions and Thou bestowest the fruits of all the actions. Thou art the Śakti of Viṣṇu, Thou art revered, worshipped. Thou bestowest all that is auspicious; Thou art purity; Thou bestowest purity, Thou art good natured. So I meditate on Thee."

Thus meditating, the intelligent one should worship Dakśiṇā with the principal *mantra*. Then with the Vedic *mantras, pādyas*, etc. (offerings of various sorts) are to be offered. Now the *mantra* as stated in the *Vedas,* runs thus: ***Āūṁ śrīṁ klīṁ hṛīṁ dakśiṇāyai svāhā***. With this *mantra,* all the offerings, such as *pādyas, arghyas,* etc., are to be given, and one should worship, as per rules, Dakśiṇā Devī with devotion.

O Nārada! Thus I have stated to you the anecdote of Dakśiṇā. Happiness, pleasure, and the fruits of all *karmas* are obtained by this. Being engaged in sacrificial acts, in this Bhāratavarṣa, if one hears attentively this *dhyānam* of Dakśiṇā, his sacrifice becomes defectless. So much so that the man who has got no sons gets undoubtedly good and qualified sons; if he has no wife, he gets a best wife, good natured, beautiful, of slender waist, capable to give many sons, sweet speaking, humble, chaste, pure, and *kulīna;* if he be void of learning, he gets learning; if he be poor he gets wealth; if he be without any land, he gets land; if he has no attendants, he gets attendants. If a man hears for one month this *stotra* of Dakśiṇā Devī, he gets over all difficulties and dangers, bereavements from friends, troubles, inprisonments and all other calamities."

Here ends the Forty-fifth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the anecdote of Dakśiṇā in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XLVI—the Anecdote of Śāsthī Devī

1. Nārada said: "O Thou, the foremost of the knowers of the Vedas! I have heard from you the anecdotes of many Devīs. Now I want to hear the lives of other Devīs also. Kindly describe."

2. Nārāyaṇa said: "O best of the Brāhmaṇas! The lives and glorious deeds of all the Devīs are described separately. Now say which lives you want to hear."

3. Nārada said:"O Lord! Śāsthī, Maṅgalā Chandī and Manasā are the parts of Prakṛti. Now I want to hear about their lives."

4-22. Nārāyaṇa said: "O child! The sixth part of Prakṛti is named Śāsthī. The Devī Śāsthī is the Presiding Deity of infants and children; She is the Māyā of Viṣṇu and She bestows sons to all. She is one of the sixteen Mātṛkās. She is known by the name of Devasenā. She performs *vratas* (vows); She is the chaste and dearest wife of Skanda. She decides on the

longevity of children and is always engaged in their preservation. So much so, that this *siddha-yogīnī* always keeps the children on her side.

O best of Brāhmaṇas! I will now talk about the method of worshipping this Devī and the history about Her bestowing children that I heard from Dharma Deva. Hear. Svāyambhuva Manu had one son Priyavrata. He was a great *yogīndra* and remained practicing austerities. So he was not inclined to have any wife. At last by the effort and request of Brahmā, he got himself married. But many days passed, and he could not see the face of a son. Then Mahārṣi Kaśyapa became his priest in the Putresti sacrifice (to get a son); and when the sacrifice was over, he gave the sacrificial offering called *charu* to his wife Mālinī. On eating the *charu,* the queen Mālinī become pregnant. For twelve Deva years she held the womb. After twelve years she delivered a fully-developed son of a golden color; but the son was lifeless and his two eyeballs were upset. At this, her friends' wives became very sorry and began to weep. The mother of the child became so very sorrowful that she became senseless.

O Muni! The King himself took the son on his breast and went to the burning ground. There with his child on his breast he began to cry aloud. Rather he got himself ready to quit his own life than leave the son from away his breast. At this time he saw in the space overhead an aerial car, white as crystal, made of excellent jewels, coming towards him. The car was shining with its own luster, encircled with woven silken cloth, which added to its beauty. Innumerable garlands of variegated colors gave it a very nice and charming appearance. On that car was seated a *siddha-yogīnī*, very beautiful, of a lovely appearance of a color like that of white *campakas*, always youthful, smiling, adorned with jeweled ornaments, ever gracious to show favor to the devotees. On seeing Her, the King Priyavrata placed the child from his breast on the ground and began to worship Her and chant hymns to Her with great love and devotion. And he then asked that peaceful lady, the wife of Skanda, Who was shining like a summer sun: 'O beautiful! Who art Thou? Whose wife art Thou and whose daughter art

Thou? From Thy appearance it seems that Thou art fortunate and respected amongst the female sex.'

23-24. O Nārada! In ancient times, when the Daityas dispossessed the Devas of their positions, this Lady was elected as a general and got victory for the Devas; hence She was named Devasenā. Hearing the words of the King Priyavrata, Devasenā, who fought for the Devas and was all good to the whole world, said:

25-42. 'O King! I am the mind-born daughter of Brahmā. My name is Devasenā. The creator before created Me out of His mind and made Me over to the hands of Skanda. Amongst the Mātṛkās, I am known as Śāsthī, the wife of Skanda. I am the sixth part of Prakṛti; hence I am named Śāsthī. I give sons to those who have no sons, wives to those who have no wives, wealth to the poor, and I give works to those who are workers (*karmīs*).

Happiness, pain, fear, sorrow, joy, good, and wealth and adversity all are the fruits of *karmas*. As the result of one's *karmas*, people get lots of sons and it is due to the result of one's *karma* again that people are denuded of all the issues of their family. As the result of *karma*, the people get dead sons; and as the result of *karma* the people get long lives. All enjoy the fruits of their *karmas*, whether they be well qualified, or deformed or whether they have many wives, or whether they have no wife, whether they be beautiful, religious, diseased, it is all through *karmas, karmas*. Disease comes out of their *karmas*. Again they get cured by their *karmas*. So, O King! It is stated in the *Vedas* that *karma* is the most powerful of all.'

Thus saying, Devasenā took the dead child on her lap; and, by Her wisdom, early made the child alive. The King saw the child of a golden color got back his life and began to smile. Thus bidding goodbye to the King, Devasenā took the child and became ready to depart. At this the King's palate and throat got dry and he began again to chant hymns to Her. The Devī Śāsthī became pleased at the *stotra* made by the King. The Devī then addressed the King and said: 'O King! All that is stated in the *Vedas* is made up of *karmas*. You are the son of Svāyambhuva Manu, and the Lord of

the three worlds. You better promulgate My worship in the three worlds and you yourself worship Me. Then I will give you your beautiful son, the lotus of your family. Your son, born in part of Nārāyaṇa, will be famous by the name of Suvrata. He will be well-qualified, a great literary man, able to remember his conditions in his former lives, the best of *yogīs*, performer of one hundred *yajñas*, the best of all, bowed down by the Kṣatriyas, strong as one *lakh* powerful elephants, wealthy, fortunate, pure, favorite of literary persons, learned and bestower of the fruits of the ascetics, renowned and bestower of wealth and prosperity to the three worlds.' Thus saying Devasenā gave the child to the king. When the king promised that he would promulgate Her worship, the Devī granted him boons and went up to the Heavens.

43-57. The king, too, becoming very glad and surrounded by his ministers, returned to his own abode and informed all about the son. The ladies of the house, became highly delighted when they heard everything. On the occasion of the son's getting back his life, the king performed everywhere auspicious ceremonies. The worship of Śāsthī Devī commenced. Wealth was bestowed to the Brāhmaṇas. Since then, on every sixth day of the bright fortnight in every month, great festivals in honor of Śāsthī Devī began to be celebrated. Since then, throughout the kingdom, on every sixth day after the birth of a child in the lying-in-chamber, Śāsthī Devī began to be worshipped. On the twenty-first day, the auspicious moment, at the ceremony of giving rice to a child for the first time, when sixth months old, and on all other auspicious ceremonies of the children, Śāsthī Devī's worship was made extant and the king himself performed those worships with great care and according to due rules.

Now I will tell you about the *dhyānam* and method of worship and *stotra* as I heard from Dharma Deva, and as stated in *Kauthuma-śākhā*. Hear. He has said: In a *śālagrāma* stone, in a jar, on the root of a *bata* tree, or drawing the figure on the floor of the rooms, or making an image of Śāsthī Devī, the sixth part of Prakṛti and installing it, one should worship the Devī. The Dhyānam is this:

"O Devasenā Thou art the bestower of good sons, the giver of good luck;

Thou art mercy and kindness and the progenitor of the world; Thy color is bright like that of the white *campaka* flowers. Thou art decked with jeweled ornaments. Thou art pure, and the highest and best Devī. Obeisance to Thee! I meditate on Thee." Thus meditating, the worshipper should place a flower on his own head. Then again meditating and uttering the principal *mantra,* one is to offer the *pādya* (water for washing feet), *arghya, ācamanaīya*, scents, flowers, *dhūpa*, lights, offerings of food and best roots and fruits and one should worship thus with various things Śāsthī Devī. ***Āūṁ hṛīṁ śāsthī devyai svāhā*** is the principal *mantra* of Śāsthī Devī. This great *mantra* of eight letters a man should repeat as his strength allows. After the *japam*, the worshipper should chant hymns with devotion and undivided attention and then bow down. The *stotra* (hymn) of Śāsthī Devī as per *Sāma-Veda* is very beautiful and son-bestowing. The lotus-born Brahmā has said: 'If one repeats (makes *japam*) this eight-lettered *mantra* one *lakh* of times, one gets certainly a good son. O best of Munis! Now I am going to say the auspicious *stotra* of Śāsthī Devī as composed by Priyavrata. Hear.

58-73. One's desires are fulfilled when one reads this very secret *stotra.* Thus the King Priyavrata said: "O Devī, Devasenā! I bow down to Thee. O great Devī! Obeisance to Thee! Thou art the bestower of *siddhis;* Thou art peaceful; obeisance to Thee! Thou art the bestower of good; Thou art Devasenā; Thou art Śāsthī Devī, I bow down to Thee! Thou grantest boons to persons; Thou bestowest sons and wealth to men. So obeisance to Thee! Thou givest happiness and *mokṣa;* Thou art Śāsthī Devī; I bow down to Thee. Thou thyself art *siddha;* so I bow down to Thee. O Śāsthī Devī! Thou art the sixth part of this creation; Thou art *siddha-yogīnī,* so I bow down to Thee. Thou art the essence, Thou art Sāradā; Thou art the highest Devī. So I bow down again and again to Thee. Thou art the presiding Deity Śāsthī Devī of the children; I bow down to Thee. Thou grantest good; Thou Thyself art good and Thou bestowest the fruits of all *karmas*. O Thou, O Śāsthī Devī! Thou showest Thy form to Thy devotees; I bow down to Thee! Thou art *śuddha-sattva* and respected by all the persons in all their actions.

Thou art the wife of Skanda. All worship Thee. O Śāsthī Devī! Thou hadst saved the Devas. So obeisance to Thee O Śāsthī Devī! Thou hast no envy, no anger; so obeisance to Thee. O Sureśvarī! Give me wealth, give me dear things, give me sons. Give me respect from all persons; give me victory; slay my enemies. O Mahesvarī! Give me *dharma;* give me name and fame; I bow down again again to Śāsthī Devī. O Śāsthī Devī! worshipped reverentially by all! Give me lands, give me subjects, give me learning; have welfare for me; I bow down again and again to Śāsthī Devī."

O Nārada! Thus praising the Devī, Priyavrata got a son, renowned and ruling over a great kingdom through the favor of Śāsthī Devī. If any man that has no son, hears this *stotra* of Śāsthī Devī for one year with undivided attention, he gets easily an excellent son, having a long life. If one worships for one year with devotion this Devasenā and hears this *stotra*, even the most barren woman becomes freed from all her sins and gets a son. Through the grace of Śāsthī Devī, that son becomes a hero, well qualified, literate, renowned and long-lived. If any woman who bears only a single child or delivers dead children hears with devotion for one year this *stotra*, she gets easily, through the Devī's grace, a good son. If the father and mother both hear with devotion, this story during the period of their child's illness, then the child becomes cured by the Grace of the Devī."

Here ends the Forty-sixth chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the anecdote of Śāsthī Devī in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XLVII—Manasā's Story

1-25 Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! I have now narrated the anecdote of Śāsthī as stated in the *Vedas*. Now hear the anecdote of Maṅgala Chandī, approved of by the *Vedas* and respected by literary persons. The Chandī who is very skilled in all auspicious works and who is the most auspicious of all good things, is Maṅgal Chandīkā. Or the Chandī who is an object of worship of Maṅgala (Mars), the son of earth and the bestower of desires is

Maṅgala Chandīkā. Or the Chandī who is an object of worship of Maṅgala of the family of Manu who was the ruler of the whole world composed of seven islands and the bestower of all desires, is Maṅgala Chandī. Or it may be that the Mūla-Prakṛti, the Governess, the ever-gracious Durgā assumed the form of Maṅgala Chandī and has become the iṣṭā Devatā of women. When there was the fight with Tripurāsura, this Maṅgala Chandī, higher than the highest was first worshipped by Mahādeva, stimulated by Viṣṇu, on a critical moment. O Brāhmaṇa! While the fighting was going on, a Daitya threw out of anger one car on Mahādeva and as that car was about to fall on Him, Brahmā and Viṣṇu gave a good advice when Mahādeva began to praise Durgā Devī at once. Durgā Devī that time assuming the form of Maṅgala Chandī appeared and said 'No fear, no fear, Bhagavān Viṣṇu will be Thy carrier buffalo. I will be also Thy Śakti in the action and Hari, full of Māyā, will also help Thee. Thou better slayest the enemy that dispossessed the Devas.'

O child! Thus saying, the Devī Maṅgala Chandī disappeared and She became the Śakti of Mahādeva. Then with the help of the weapon given by Viṣṇu, the Lord of Umā killed the Asura. When the Daitya fell, the Devas and Ṛṣis began to chant hymns to Mahādeva with devotion and with their heads bent low. From the sky, a shower of flowers fell instantaneously on Mahādeva's head. Brahmā and Viṣṇu became glad and gave their best wishes to Him. Then ordered by Brahmā and Viṣṇu, Śaṅkara bathed joyously. Then He began to worship with devotion the Devī Maṅgala Chandī with *pādya, arghya, ācamanaīya* and various clothing. Flowers, sandalwood paste, various goats, sheep, buffaloes, bisons, birds, garments, ornaments, garlands, *pāyasa* (a preparation of rice, ghee, milk and sugar), *pistaka*, honey, wine, and various fruits were offered in the worship. Dancing, music with instruments and the chanting of Her name, and other festivities commenced. Reciting the *dhyāna* as in Mādhyandina, Mahādeva offered everything, pronouncing the principal radical *mantra*: ***āūṁ hṛīṁ śrīṁ klīṁ sarvapujye devī maṅgala chandīke hum phaṭ svāhā,*** the twenty-one lettered *mantra* of Maṅgala Chandī. During worship, the *kalpa-vṛkṣa*, the tree yielding all desires, must be worshipped. O Nārada! By repeating

the *mantra* ten *lakhs* times, the *mantra-siddhi* (success in realising the Deity inherent in the Mantra) comes.

Now I am saying about the *dhyānam* of Maṅgal Chandī as stated in the *Vedas* and as approved by all. Listen. 'O Devī Maṅgala Chandīke! Thou art sixteen years old; Thou art ever youthful; Thy lips are like *bimba* fruits, Thou art of good teeth and pure. Thy face looks like autumnal lotus; Thy color is like white *campakas;* Thy eyes resemble blue lilies; Thou art the preserver of the world and thou bestowest all sorts of prosperity. Thou art the light in this dark ocean of the world. So I meditate on Thee.' This is the *dhyānam*. Now hear the *stotra*, which Mahādeva recited before Her.

26-37. Mahādeva said: 'Protect me, protect me, O Mother! O Devī Maṅgal Chandīke! Thou, the destroyer of difficulties! Thou givest joy and good. Thou art clever in giving delight and fortune. Thou the bestower of all bliss and prosperity! Thou, the auspicious, Thou art Maṅgala Chandīkā. Thou art Maṅgalā, worthy of all good, Thou art the auspicious of all auspicious; Thou bestowest good to the good persons. Thou art worthy to be worshipped on Tuesday (the Maṅgala day); Thou art the Deity desired by all. The King Maṅgala, born of Manu family always worships Thee. Thou, the presiding Devī of Maṅgala; Thou art the repository of all the good that are in this world. Thou, the Bestower of auspicious *mokṣa*. Thou, the best of all; Thou, the respository of all good; Thou makest one cross all the *karmas;* the people worship Thee on every Tuesday; Thou bestowest abundance of Bliss to all.'

Thus praising Maṅgala Chandīkā with this *stotra*, and worshipping Her on every Tuesday, Śambhu departed. The Devī Sarva Maṅgalā was first worshipped by Mahādeva. Next she was worshipped by the planet Mars; then by the King Maṅgala; then on every Tuesday by the ladies of every household. Fifthly she was worshipped by all men desirous of their welfare. So in every universe Maṅgal Chandīkā, first worshipped by Mahādeva, came to be worshipped by all. Next She came to be worshipped everywhere by the Devas, Munis, Mānavas and Manus. O Muni! He who hears with undivided attention this *stotra* of the Devī Maṅgala Chandīkā

finds no evil anywhere. Rather all good comes to him. Day after day he gets sons and grandsons and so his prosperity gets increased, yea, verily increased!

38-58. Nārāyaṇa said: O Nārada! Thus I narrated to you the stories of Śāsthī and Maṅgala Chandīkā, according to the *Vedas*. Now hear the story of Manasā that I heard from the mouth of Dharma Deva.

Manasā is the mind-born daughter of Mahārṣi Kaśyapa; hence she is named Manasā; or it may be, She who plays with the mind is Manasā. Or it may be, She who meditates on God with her mind and gets rapture in Her meditation of God is named Manasā. She finds pleasure in Her own Self, the great devotee of Viṣṇu, a *siddha-yogīnī*. For three *yugas* She worshipped Śrī Kṛṣṇa and then She became a *siddha-yogīnī*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the *gopīs*, seeing the body of Manasā lean and thin due to austerities, or seeing her worn out like the Muni Jarat Kāru called her by the name of Jarat Kāru. Hence Her name has come also to be Jarat Kāru. Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of mercy, gave Her out of kindness, Her desired boon; She worshipped Him, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa also worshipped Her. Devī Manasā is known in the heavens, in the abode of the Nāgas (serpents), on earth, in Brahmaloka, in all the worlds as of very fair color, beautiful and charming. She is named Jagad Gaurī as she is of a very fair color in the world. Her other name is Śaivī, as she is the disciple of Śiva. She is named Vaiṣṇavī, as she is greatly devoted to Viṣṇu. She saved the Nāgas in the snake sacrifice performed by Parīkṣit, she is named Nageśvarī and Nāga Bhaginī, and She is capable to destroy the effects of poison. She is called Visahari. She got the *siddha-yoga* from Mahādeva; hence She is named Siddha Yogīnī; She got from Him the great knowledge, so she is called Mahā Jñāṇayutā, and as she got *mṛtasamjīvanī* (making alive the dead) she is known by the name of Mṛtasanjīvanī. As the great ascetic is the mother of the great Muni Āstīk, she is known in the world as Āstīka Mātā. As She is the dear wife of the great high-souled Yogī Muni Jarat Kāru, worshipped by all, she is called as Jarat Kārupriya. Jaratkāru, Jagadgaurī, Manasā, Siddha Yogīnī, Vaisnavī, Nāga Bhaginī, Śaivi, Nageśvarī, Jaratkārupriyā, Āstikamātā, Visahari, and Mahā

Jñāṇayutā—these are the twelve names of Manasā, worshipped everywhere in the universe. He who recites these twelve names while worshipping Manasā Devī, he or any of his family has no fear of snakes. If there be any fear of snakes in one's bed, if the house be infested with snakes or if one goes to a place difficult for fear of snakes or if one's body be encircled with snakes, all the fears are dispelled if one reads this *stotra* of Manasā. There is no doubt about this. The snakes run away out of fear from the sight of him who daily recites the Manasā-*stotra*. Ten *lakhs* of times repeating the Manasā *mantra* give one man success in the *stotra*. He can easily drink poison who attains success in this *stotra*. The snakes become his ornaments; they carry him even on their backs. He who is a great *siddha* can sit on a seat of snakes and can sleep on a bed of snakes. In the end he sports day and night with Viṣṇu.

Here ends the Forty-seventh Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on Manasā's story in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XLVIII—the Anecdote of Manasā

1-30. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! I will now speak of the *dhyānam* and the method of worship of Śrī Devī Manasā, as stated in the *Sāma-Veda*. Hear. 'I meditate on the Devī Manasā, Whose color is fair like that of the white *campaka* flower, whose body is decked all over with jeweled ornaments, whose clothing is purified by fire, whose sacred thread is the Nāgas (serpents), who is full of wisdom, who is the foremost of great *jñanins*, who is the presiding Deity of the *siddhas*, Who Herself is a *siddha* and who bestows *siddhis* to all.' O Muni! Thus meditating on Her, one should present Her flowers, scents, ornaments, offerings of food and various other articles, pronouncing the principal seed-*mantra*. O Nārada! The twelve-lettered *siddha-mantra*, to be mentioned below, yields to the *bhaktas* their desires like the *kalpa* tree. Now the radical *mantra* as stated in the *Vedas* is ***āūṁ hṛīṁ śrīṁ klīṁ aiṁ manasā devyai svāhā***. Repetition of this five *lakhs* of times yields success to one who repeats. He who attains success in this *mantra*

gets unbounded name and fame in this world. Poison becomes nectar to him and he himself becomes famous like Dhanvantari. O Nārada! If anybody bathes on any Samkrānti day (when the sun enters from one sign to another) and going to a private room, invokes the Devī Manasā Īśānā and worships Her with devotion, or makes sacrifices of animals before the Devī on the fifth day of the fortnight, he becomes certainly wealthy, endowed with sons and name and fame.

Thus I have described to you the method of worship of Manasā Devī. Now hear the anecdote of the Devī as I heard from Dharma. In olden days, men became greatly terrified on earth from snakes and took refuge of Kaśyapa, the supreme amongst the Munis. The Mahārṣi Kaśyapa became very afraid. He then with Brahmā, and by His command composed a *mantra* following the principal motto of the *Vedas*. While composing this *mantra*, he intensely thought of the Devī, the presiding Deity of that *mantra*. Through the power of his *tapasyā* and through mental power, the Devī Manasā appeared and was named so, as She was produced from the sheer influence of mind. On being born, the girl went to the abode of Śaṅkara in Kailāśa and began to worship Him and chant hymns to Him with devotion. For one thousand Divine years, the daughter of Kaśyapa served Mahādeva. When He became pleased, He gave her the great knowledge, made Her recite the *Sāma-Veda* and bestowed to her the eight-lettered Kṛṣṇa *mantra* which is like the *kalpa* tree. ***Śrīṁ hṛīṁ klīṁ kṛṣṇāya namaḥ*** was the eight-lettered *mantra*. She got from Him a *kavaca* (amulet) auspicious to the three worlds, the method of worship and all the rules of *purascharana* (repetition of the name of a deity attended with burnt offerings, oblations, etc.) and went by His command to perform in Puṣkara very hard austerities. There she worshipped Kṛṣṇa for the three *yugas*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then appeared before Her. On seeing Kṛṣṇa, immediately the girl, worn out by austerities, worshipped Him, and she was also worshipped by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa granted her the boon, 'Let you be worshipped throughout the world' and departed.

O Nārada! She was thus first worshipped by the Supreme Spirit, the Devī Kṛṣṇa; secondly by Śaṅkara; thirdly by the Mahārṣi Kaśyapa and the

Devas. Then she was worshipped by the Munis, Manus, Nāgas, and men; and She became widely renowned in the three worlds. Kaśyapa gave Her over to the hands of Jaratkāru Muni. At the request of the Brāhmaṇa Kaśyapa, the Muni Jarat Kāru married Her. After the marriage, one day, being tired with his long work of *tapasyā*, Jarat Kāru laid his head on the hip and loins of his married wife and fell fast asleep. Gradually the evening came in. The sun set. Then Manasā thought, 'If my husband fails to perform the *sandhyā*, the daily duty of the Brāhmaṇas, he would be involved in the sin of *brahma-hātyā*. It is definitely stated in the *śāstras*, that if any Brāhmaṇa does not perform his Sandhyā in the morning and in the evening, he becomes wholly impure and the sins *brahma-hatyā* and other crimes come down on his head.' Arguing thus, these thoughts in her mind, as commanded by the *Vedas*, at last she awakened her husband, who then got up from his sleep.

31-60. The Muni Jarat Kāru said: 'O chaste one! I was sleeping happily. Why have you thus interrupted my sleep? All her vows turn out useless who injures her husband. Her *tapas*, fastings, gifts, and other meritorious works all come to vain who do things unpleasant to her husband. If she worships her husband, she is said to have worshipped Śrī Kṛṣṇa. For the sake of fulfilling the vows of the chaste women, Hari himself becomes their husbands. All sorts of charities, gifts, all sacrifices, fastings, practicing all the virtues, keeping to truth, worshipping all the Devas, nothing can turn out equal to even one-sixteenth part of serving one's husband. She ultimately goes with her husband to the region of Vaikuṇṭha, who serves her husband in this holy land Bhārata. She comes certainly of a bad family who does unpleasant acts to her husband or who uses unpleasant words to her husband. She goes to the Kumbhīpāka hell as long as the Sun and Moon last and then she becomes born as a Chandālī, without husband son.' Speaking thus, Jarat Kāru, the best of the Munis, became angry and his lips began to tremble. Seeing this, the best Manasā, shivering with fear, addressed her husband:

'I have broken your sleep and awakened you, fearing you might miss your time of *sandhyā*. I have committed an offense. Punish me as you think. I know that a man goes to the Kālasūtra hell as long as the Sun and Moon last in this world, who throws an obstacle when any man eats, sleeps or enjoys with the opposite sex.'

O Nārada! Thus saying, the Devī Manasā fell down at the feet of her husband cried again and again. On the other hand, knowing the Muni angry, and ready to curse her, the Sun came there with Sandhyā Devī. And He humbly spoke to him with fear: 'O Bhagavān! Seeing Me going to set, and fearing that you may miss *dharma*, your chaste wife has awakened you. O Brāhmaṇa! Now I am also under your refuge; forgive me. O Bhagavān! You should not curse Me. The more so, a Brāhmaṇa's heart is as tender as the fresh butter. The anger of a Brāhmaṇa lasts only half the twinkling of an eye (*ksan*). When a Brāhmaṇa becomes angry, he can burn all this world and can make a new creation. So who can possess influence like a Brāhmaṇa? A Brāhmaṇa is a part of Brahman; he is shining day and night with the *tejas* of Brahman. A Brāhmaṇa meditates always on the eternal light of Brahman.'

O Nārada! Hearing the words of the Sun, the Brāhmaṇa became satisfied and blessed Him. The Sun also went to His own place, thus blessed daily. To keep his promise, the Brāhmaṇa Jaratkāru quit Manasā. She became very sorry and began to cry aloud with pain and anguish. Being very much distressed by then danger, she remembered Her īṣṭa-*deva* Mahādeva, Brahmā, Hari and Her father Mahārṣi Kaśyapa. On the very instant when Manasā remembered Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the *gopīs*, Mahādeva, Brahmā and Mahārṣi Kaśyapa appeared there. Then seeing his own desired Deity Śrī Kṛṣṇa, superior to Prakṛti, beyond the attributes, Jaratkāru began to praise Him and bowed down to Him repeatedly. Then bowing down to Mahādeva, Brahmā and Kaśyapa, he enquired why they had come there. Brahmā then instantly bowed down at the lotus feet of Hrisīkeśa and spoke in befitting words at that time: 'If the Brāhmaṇa Jaratkāru leaves at all his legal wife, devoted to her own *dharma*, he should first of all have a son born

of her to fulfil his *dharma*. O Muni! Any man can quit his wife, after he has impregnated her and got a son. But if he leaves his wife without having a son, then all his merits are lost as all water leaks out of a sieve or a strainer.'

O Nārada! Hearing thus the words of Brahmā, the Muni Jaratkāru by his *yogik* power recited a *mantra* and touching the navel of Manasā spoke to her: 'O Manasā! A son will be born in your womb—self-controlled, religious, and best of the Brāhmaṇas.

61-77. That son will be fiery, energetic, renowned, well-qualified the foremost of the knowers of the *Vedas*, a great *jñānin* and the best of the *yogīs*. That son is a true son, indeed, who uplifts his family who is religious and devoted to Hari. At his birth all the Pitṛs dance with great joy. And the wife is a true wife who is devoted to her husband, good-natured and sweet-speaking and religious, she is the mother of sons, she is the woman of the family and she is the preserver of the family. He is the true friend, indeed, the giver of one's desired fruits, who imparts devotion to Hari. That father is a true father who shows the way to devotion to Hari. And she is the true mother, through whom this entering into wombs ceases forever; yea, forever! That sister is the true kind sister from whom the fear of death vanishes. That *guru* is the *guru* who gives the Viṣṇu-*mantra* and the true devotion to Viṣṇu. That *guru* is the real bestower of knowledge who gives the *jñāṇam* by which Śrī Kṛṣṇa is meditated one, in whom this whole universe, moving and non-moving from the Brahmā down to a blade of grass, is appearing and disappearing. There is no doubt about this. What knowledge can be superior to that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The knowledge derived from the *Vedas*, or from the sacrifices or from any other source is not superior to the service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The devotion and knowledge of Śrī Hari is the essence of all knowledge; all else is vain and mockery. It is through this real knowledge; that this bondage from this world is severed. But the *guru* who does not impart this devotion and knowledge of Śrī Hari is not the real *guru*; rather he is an enemy that leads one to bondage. Verily he kills his disciple when he does not free him. He can never be called a *guru*, father or friend who does not free his disciple from the pains in the

various wombs and from the pains of death. Verily he can never be called a friend who does not show the way to the undecaying Śrī Kṛṣṇa, source of the highest bliss. So, O chaste one! You better worship that undecaying *para-brahman* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is beyond the attributes. O beloved! I have left you out of a pretence; please excuse me for this. The chaste women are always forgiving; never they become angry because they are born of *sattva-guṇas*. Now I go to Puṣkara for *tapasyā;* you better go wherever you like. Those who have no desire have their minds always attached to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.'

O Nārada! Hearing the words of Jaratkāru, the Devī Manasā became very much distressed and bewildered with great sorrow. Tears began to flow from her eyes. She then humbly spoke to her dearest husband: 'O Lord! I have not committed any such offense, as you leave me altogether when I have thus broken your sleep.

78-115. However kindly show thyself to me when I will recollect you. The bereavement of one's friend is painful; more than that is the bereavement of a son. Again one's husband is dearer than one hundred sons; so the bereavement of one's husband is the heaviest of all. To women, the husband is the most beloved of all earthly things; hence he is called *priya* (dear). As the heart of one who has only one son is attached to that son, as the heart of a Vaiṣṇava is attached to Śrī Hari; as the mind of one-eyed man to his one eye, as the mind of the thirsty is attached to water, as the mind of the hungry is attached to food, as the mind of the passionate is attached to lust, as the mind of a thief is attached to the properties of others, as the mind of a lewd man to his prostitute, as the mind of the learned is attached to the *śāstras*, as the mind of a trader is attached to his trade, so the minds of chaste women are attached to their husbands.'

Thus saying, Manasā fell down at the feet of her husband. Jaratkāru, the ocean of mercy, then, took her for a moment on his lap and drenched her body with tears from his eyes. The Devī Manasā, too, distressed at the bereavement of her husband also drenched the lap of the Muni with tears from her eyes. Some time after, the true knowledge arose in them and they

both became free from fear. Jaratkāru then enlightened his wife and asked her to repeatedly meditate on the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa the supreme spirit; thus saying, he went away for his *tapasyā*. Manasā, distressed with sorrow, went to her *īṣṭa-deva* Mahādeva on Kailāśa. The auspicious Śiva and Pārvatī both consoled her with knowledge and advice.

Some days after, on an auspicious they and on an auspicious moment she gave birth to a son born in part of Nārāyaṇa, and as the *guru* of the *yogīs* and as the preceptor of the *jñānins*. When the child was in mother's womb, he heard the highest knowledge from the mouth of Mahādeva; therefore he was born as a *yogīndra* and the spiritual teacher of the *jñānins*. On his birth, Bhagavān Śaṅkara performed his natal ceremonies and performed various auspicious ceremonies. The Brāhmaṇas chanted the *Vedas* for the welfare of the child; various wealth and jewels and *kirītas* and invaluable gems were distributed by Śaṅkara to the Brāhmaṇas; and Pārvatī gave one *lakh* cows and various jewels to others. After some days, Mahādeva taught him the four *Vedas* with their *aṅgas* (six limbs) and gave him, at last, the *mṛtyumjaya-mantra*. As in Manasā's mind there reigned the devotion to her husband, the devotion to her *īṣṭa-deva* and *guru*, the child's name was kept Āstika.

Āstika then got the *mahā-mantra* from Śaṅkara and by His command went to Puṣkara to worship Viṣṇu, the supreme spirit. There he practiced *tapasyā* for three *lakh* divine years. And then he returned to Kailāśa, to bow down to the great *yogī* and the Lord Śaṅkara. Then, bowing down to Śaṅkara, he remained there for some time. Then Manasā with her son Āstika went to the hermitage of Kaśyapa, her father. Seeing Manasā with son, the Mahārṣi's gladness knew no bounds. He fed innumerable Brāhmaṇas for the welfare of the child, and distributed *lakhs* and *lakhs* of jewels. The joy of Aditi and Diti (the wives of Kaśyapa) knew no bounds; Manasā remained there for a long, long time with his son.

O child! Hear now an anecdote on this. One day due to bad *karma*, a Brāhmaṇa cursed the king Parīkṣit, the son of Abhimanyu; one Ṛṣi's son named Śringī, sipping the water of the river Kauśikī cursed thus: 'When a week expires, the snake Takṣaka will bite you, and you will be burnt with

the poison of that snake Takṣaka.' Hearing this, the King Parīkṣit, to preserve his life, went to a place, solitary where wind even can have no access and he lived there. When the week was over, Dhanvantari saw, while he was going on the road, the snake Takṣaka who was also going to bite the king. A conversation and a great friendship arose between them; Takṣaka gave him voluntarily a gem; and Dhanvantari, getting it, became pleased and went back gladly to his house. The king Parīkṣit was lying on his bedstead when Takṣaka bit the king. The king died soon and went to the next world. The king Janamejaya then performed the funeral obsequies of his father and commenced afterwards the Sarpa-Yajñā (a sacrifice where the snakes are the victims). In that sacrifice, innumerable snakes gave up their lives by the *brahma-teja*, the fire of the Brāhmaṇas. At this, Takṣaka became terrified and took refuge of Indra. The Brāhmaṇas then, in a body, became ready to burn Takṣaka along with Indra, when Indra and the other Devas went to Manasā.

Mahendra, bewildered with fear, began to chant hymns to Manasā. Manasā called her own son Āstika, who then went to the sacrificial assembly of the king Janamejaya and begged that the lives of Indra and Takṣaka be spared. The king, then, at the command of the Brāhmaṇas, granted their lives. The king completed his sacrifice and gladly gave *dakśiṇās* to the Brāhmaṇas. The Brāhmaṇas, Munis, and Devas collectively went to Manasā, worshipped Her separately and chanted hymns to Her. Indra went there with various articles and worshipped Manasā with devotion and with great love and care; and he chanted hymns to Her. Then bowing down before Her, and under the instructions of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa, offered her sixteen articles, sacrifices and various other good and pleasant things. O Nārada! Thus worshipping Her, they all went to their respective places. Thus I have told you the anecdote of Manasā. What more do you want to hear? Say."

Nārada said: "O Lord! How did Indra praise Her and what was the method of His worshipping Her? I want to hear all this."

116-124. Nārāyaṇa said: “Indra first took his bath; and, performing *ācamana* and becoming pure, He put on fresh clean clothing and placed Manasā Devī on a jewel throne. Then reciting the Vedic *mantras* he made Her perform Her bath by the water of the Mandākinī, the celestial river Ganges, poured from a jewel jar. Then He made Her put on the beautiful clothing, uninflammable by fire. Then He caused sandalwood paste to be applied to Her body all over with devotion and offered water for washing Her feet and *arghya*, an offering of grass and flowers and rice, etc., as a token of preliminary worship. First of all the six Devatās Gaṇeśa, Sun, Fire, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Śivā were worshipped. Then with the ten-lettered *mantra*, ***āūṁ hṛīṁ śrīṁ manasā devyai svāhā*** offered all the offerings to Her. Stimulated by the God Viṣṇu, Indra worshipped with great joy the Devī with sixteen articles so very rare to any other person. Drums and instruments were sounded. From the celestial heavens, a shower of flowers was thrown on the head of Manasā. Then, at the advice of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa, the Devas and the Brāhmaṇas, Indra, with tears in his eyes, began to chant hymns to Manasā, when his whole body was thrilled with joy and hairs stood on their ends.

125-145. Indra said: ‘O Devī Manase! Thou standest the highest amongst the chaste women. Therefore I want to chant hymns to Thee. Thou art higher than the highest. Thou art most supreme. What I now praise Thee? Chanting hymns is characterised by the description of one’s nature; so it is said in the *Vedas*. But, O Prakṛti! I am unable to ascertain and describe Thy qualities. Thou art of the nature of *śuddha-sattva* (higher than the pure *sattva* unmixed with any other *guṇas*); Thou art free from anger and malice. The Muni Jaratkāru could not forsake Thee; therefore it was that he prayed for Thy separation before. O chaste One! I have now worshipped Thee. Thou art an object of worship as my mother Aditi is. Thou art my sister full of mercy; Thou art the mother full of forgiveness. O Sureśvarī! It is through Thee that my wife, sons and my life are saved. I am worshipping Thee. Let Thy love be increased. O world-Mother! Thou art eternal; though Thy worship is extant everywhere in the universe; yet I worship Thee to have it extended further and further. O Mother! Those who worship Thee with

devotion on the Sankrānti day of the month of Āsūdha, or on the Nāga Pañchamī day, or on the Sankrānti day of every month or on every day, they get their sons and grandsons, wealth and grains increased and become themselves famous, well gratified, learned and renowned. If anybody does not worship Thee out of ignorance, rather if he censures Thee, he will be bereft of Lakṣmī and he will be always afraid of snakes. Thou art the Gṛha Lakṣmī of all the householders and the Rāja Lakṣmī of Vaikuṇṭha. Bhagavān Jarat Kāru, the great Muni, born in part of Nārāyaṇa, is Thy husband. Father Kaśyapa has created Thee mentally by his power of *tapas* and fire to preserve us; Thou art his mental creation; hence thy name is Manasā. Thou Thyself hast become *siddha-yogīnī* in this world by thy mental power; hence thou art widely known as Manasā Devī in this world and worshipped by all. The Devas always worship Thee mentally with devotion; hence the Paṇḍitas call Thee by the name of Manasā. O Devī! Thou always servest Truth, hence Thou art of the nature of Truth. He certainly gets Thee who always thinks of Thee verily as of the nature of truth.'

O Nārada! Thus praising his sister Manasā and receiving from her the desired boon, Indra went back, dressed in his own proper dress, to his own abode. The Devī Manasā, then, honored and worshipped everywhere, and thus worshipped by her brother, long lived in Her father's house, with Her son.

One day Surabhi (the heavenly cow) came from the Goloka and bathed Manasā with milk, and worshipped Her with great devotion and revealed to Her all the *tattva-jñāṇas*, to be kept very secret. (This is now made the current story wherever any Liṅgam suddenly becomes visible.) O Nārada! Thus worshipped by the Devas and Surabhi, the Devī Manasā went to the heavenly regions. O Muni! One gets no fear from snakes who recites this holy *stotra* composed by Indra and worships Manasā; his family descendants are freed from the fear due to snakes. If anybody becomes *siddha* in this *stotra*, poison becomes nectar to him. Reciting the *stotra* five

lakhs of times makes a man *siddha* in this *stotra*. So much so that he can sleep on a bed of snakes and he can ride on snakes.

Here ends the Forty-eighth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the anecdote of Manasā in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XLIX—the Anecdote of Surabhi

1. Nārada said: "O Bhagavān! Who was that Surabhi, who came down from the region of Goloka? I want to hear Her life. Kindly describe."

2-23. Nārāyaṇa spoke: "O Devaṛṣi! The Devī Surabhi sprang from Goloka. She was the first in the creation of cows; and from Her, all the other cows have come. She is the presiding Deity of the cows. I will now speak Her history from the very beginning. Hear. Before, She appeared in the holy Vṛṇdāvan. One day the Lord of Rādhā, surrounded by the *gopīs*, was going gladly with Rādhā to the Holy Vṛṇdāvan. There he began to enjoy in a solitary place with great pleasure. He is all-will, and suddenly a desire arose in His mind that He would drink milk. Then He created easily the Devī Surabhi, full of milk, with Her calf, from His own left side. The calf of Surabhi is nothing else but Her wish personified. Seeing Surabhi, Śrīdāma milked Her in a new earthen jar. The milk is more sweet than even the nectar and it prevents birth and death! The Lord of the *gopīs* drank the milk. What milk dropped out of the jar, created a big tank! The tank measured one hundred *yojanas* in length and in breadth and is known in Goloka by the name of Ksīra-sāgara. The *gopīkas* and Rādhā play therein. At the will of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Whose nature is all-will, that tank become full of excellent gems and jewels. Then, from every pore of Surabhi, there appeared suddenly one *lakh koti* Kāmadhenus (cows who yield according to one's desires). So much so that every *gopa* who used to live there in Goloka had one Kāmadhenu, and each house had one such. Their calves again became so many that no limit can be put to them. Thus, by degrees,

the whole universe was filled with cows. This is the origin of the cow creation.

O Nārada! Surabhi was first worshipped by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore She is so much honored everywhere. On the day next the Divālī night (new moon in the month of October), Surabhi was worshipped by the command of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is heard from the mouth of Dharma Deva. O child! Now hear the *dhyānam, stotra* and the method of worship of Surabhi as mentioned in the *Vedas*. I will now speak on this. ***Āūm̐ surabhyai namaḥ***, is the principal six-lettered *mantra* of Surabhi. If anybody repeats this *mantra* one *lakh* times, he becomes *siddha* in this *mantra*. This is like Kalpa-vṛkṣa (a tree yielding all desires) to the devotees. The *dhyānam* of Surabhi is mentioned in the *Yajur-Veda*. Success, prosperity, increase and freedom come as the result of worshipping Surabhi.

The Dhyānam runs as follows: "O Devī Surabhi! Thou art Lakṣmī, Thou art best, Thou art Rādhā; Thou art the chief companion of Śrī Rādhā, Thou art the first and the source of the cow-creation, Thou art holy and Thou sanctifiest the persons; Thou fufillest the desires of the devotees and Thou purifiest the whole universe. Therefore I meditate on Thee." Reciting this *dhyānam*, the Brāhmaṇas worship the Devī Surabhi in jars, on the heads of cows, or on the pegs where cows are fastened or on *śālagrāma* stone or in water or in fire. O Muni! He who worships Devī Surabhi with devotion on the next day morning after Divālī night, becomes also worshipped in this world. Once a day in the Vārāhakalpa Surabhi did not yield milk, by the influence of Viṣṇu Māyā. The Devas became very anxious. Then they went to the Brahmaloka and began to praise Brahmā. At His advice, Indra began to chant hymns (*stotra*) to Surabhi:

24-33. The Devendra said: "O world-Mother! O Devī! O Mahā-Devī! O Surabhi! Thou art the source of the cow-creation. Obeisance to Thee! Thou art the dear companion of Rādhā; Thou art the part of Kāmalā; Thou art dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; Thou art the mother of cows, I bow down to Thee. Thou art like the *kalpa-vṛkṣa* (a tree yielding all desires), Thou art the chief of all; Thou yieldest milk, wealth and prosperity and increase thereof. So I bow

down to Thee. Thou art auspicious, Thou art good, Thou bestowest cows. Obeisance to Thee! Thou givest fame, name and *dharma*. So I bow down to Thee."

O Nārada! Thus hearing the praise sung by Indra, the eternal Surabhi, the originator of the world, became very glad and appeared in Brahmaloka. Granting a boon to Mahendra, so very rare to others and desired by him, Subrabhi went to Goloka. The Devas, also, went back to their own abodes. The whole world was now full of milk; clarified butter came out of the milk; and from clarified butter sacrifices began to be performed and the Devas were fed and they became pleased. O child! He who recites this holy *stotra* of Surabhi with devotion gets cows, other wealth, name, fame and sons. The reciting of this *stotra* qualifies one as if he had bathed in all the sacred places of pilgrimages and he had acquired the fruits of all the sacrifices. Enjoying happiness in this world, be goes in the end to the temple of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. There living long in the service of Kṛṣṇa, he becomes able to be a son of Brahmā.

Here ends the Forty-ninth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the anecdote of Surabhi in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter LX—the Glory of Śakti

1-4. Nārada said: "O Bhagavān! I have heard all the anecdotes of Prakṛti, as according to the *śāstras*, that lead to the freedom from birth and death in this world. Now I want to hear the very secret history of Śrī Rādhā and Durgā as described in the *Vedas*. Though you have told me about Their glories, yet I am not satisfied. Verily, where is he whose heart does not melt away on hearing the glories of both of Them! This world is originated from their parts and is being controlled by them. The devotion towards them frees one easily from the bonds of *saṁsāra* (rounds of birth and death). O Muni! Kindly describe now about them."

5-44. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! I am now describing the characters of Rādhā and Durgā, as described in the *Vedas;* listen. I did not describe to anybody this secret, which is the essence of all essences and higher than the highest. This is to be kept very secret. Hearing this, one ought not to divulge it to any other. Rādhā presides over the *prāṇa* and Durgā presides over the *buddhi*. From these two, the Mūla-Prakṛti has originated this world. These two Śaktis guide the whole world. From the Mahāvirāt to the small insect, all, moving or non-moving, are under the Mūla-Prakṛti. One must satisfy Them. Unless these two be satisfied, *mukti* cannot be obtained.

Therefore one ought to serve Mūla-Prakṛti for Her satisfaction. Now of the two in Mūla-Prakṛti, I will describe fully the Rādhā *mantra*. Listen. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and others always worship this *mantra*. The principal mantra is ***śrī rādhāyai svāhā***. By this six-lettered *mantra*, *dharma* and other fruits all are obtained with ease. If to this the six lettered *mūla-mantra* ***hṛīṁ*** be added, it yields gems and jewels as desired. So much so, if thousand *koti* mouths and one hundred *koti* tongues are obtained, the glory of this *mantra* cannot be described. When the incorporeal voice of Mūla-Prakṛti was heard in the Heavens, this *mantra* was obtained, first by Kṛṣṇa in the *rāsa-maṇḍalam* in the region of Goloka where all love sentiments are played. The *Vedas* declare Him as *raso vai saḥ*. From Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu got the *mantra*; from Viṣṇu, Brahmā got it; from Brahmā Virāt got, from Virāt, Dharma, and from Dharma I have got this *mantra*. Repeating that *mantra*, I am known by the name of Ṛṣi. Brahmā and the other Devas meditate always on the Mūla-Prakṛti with greatest joy and ecstasy. Without the worship of Rādhā, never can the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa be done. So men devoted to Viṣṇu, should first of all worship Rādhā by all means. Rādhā is the presiding Deity of the *prāṇa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Hence Śrī Kṛṣṇa is so much subject to Rādhā. The Lady of the *rāsa-maṇḍalam* remains always close to Him. Without Her, Śrī Kṛṣṇa could not live even for a moment. The name Rādhā is derived from *rādhnoti* or fulfills all desires. Hence Mūla-Prakṛti is termed Rādhā. I am the Ṛṣi of all the *mantras* but the Durgā-*mantra* mentioned in this Ninth *Skandha*. Gāyatrī is the *chhanda* (meter) of those *mantras* and Rādhikā is the Devatā of them. Really, Nārāyaṇa is the Ṛṣi of all the *mantras;* Gāyatrī is the *chhanda*;

praṇava (*āūṁ*) is the *bīja* (seed) and Bhuvaneśvarī (the directrix of the world) is the Śakti. First of all the principal *mantra* is to be repeated six times; then meditation of the great Devī Rādhikā, the Śakti of the Ṛṣis is to be done, as mentioned in the *Sāma-Veda*. The meditation of Rādhā is as follows:

O Devī Radhike! Thy color is like white Campaka flower; Thy face is like the autumnal full Moon; Thy body shines with the splendor of ten million moons, Thy eyes look beautiful like autumnal lotus; Thy lips are red like *bimba* fruits, Thy loins are very heavy and decked with the girdle (*kānchī*) ornament; Thy face is always gracious with sweet smiles; Thy breasts defy the frontal globe of an elephant. Thou art ever youthful as if twelve years old; Thy body is adorned all over with ornaments! Thou art the waves of the ocean of *śringāra* (love sentiments.) Thou art ever ready to show Thy grace to the devotees; on Thy braid of hair garlands of *mallikā* and *mālatī* flowers are shining; Thy body is like a creeping plant, very gentle and tender; Thou art seated in the middle of the *rāsa-maṇḍalam* as the chief directrix; Thy one hand is ready to grant boons and another hand expresses 'Have no fear.' Thou art of a peaceful appearance; Thou art ever youthful; Thou art seated on a jewel throne; Thou art the foremost guide of the *gopīkās;* Thou art dearer to Kṛṣṇa than even His life; O Parameśvarī! The *Vedas* reveal Thy nature.

Meditating thus, one is to bathe Devī on a *śālagrāma* stone, jar, *yantra* or eight-petalled lotus and then worship Her duly. First the Devī is to be invoked; then *pādya* and *āsana*, etc., are to be offered, the principal *mantra* being pronounced at every time an offering is given. After giving water for washing both the feet, *arghya* is to be placed on the head and *ācamanaīyam* water to be offered three times on the face. *Madhuparka* (an oblation of honey, milk etc.) and a cow giving a good quantity of milk are next to be offered. Then the *yantra* is to be thought of as the bathing place where the Devī is to be bathed. Then Her body is to be wiped and a fresh cloth given for putting on. Sandalwood paste and various other ornaments are next to be given. Various garlands of flowers with Tulasī *mañjari* (flower stalks)

pārijāta flower and *satapatra* etc., then, are to be offered. Then within the eight petals, the family members of the Devī are to be thought of; worship is next to be offered in the right-hand direction (with the hands of the watch). First of all, Mālāvatī on the petal in front of (on the east) the Devī, then Mādhavī on the southeast corner, then Ratnamālā on the south, Suśīlā on the southwest, Saśikalā on the west, Pārijāta on the northwest, Parāvatī on the north and the benefactious Sundarī on the northeast corner are to be worshipped in order. Outside this, Brāhmī and the other Mātṛkās are to be worshipped and on the Bhūpūras (the entrances of the *yantra*) the Regents of the quarters, the Dikpālas and the weapons of the Devī, thunderbolt, etc., are to be worshipped. Then all the attendant Deities of the Devī are to be worshipped with scents and various other articles. Thus finishing the worship, one should chant the *stotra* (hymns) named *Sahasranāma stotra* with care and devotion. O Nārada! The intelligent man who worships thus the Rāseśvarī Devī Rādhā, becomes like Viṣṇu and goes to Goloka.

He who performs the birthday anniversary of Śrī Rādhā on the full-Moon day of the month of Kārtik, gets the blessings of Śrī Rādhā who remains near to him. For some reason Rādhā, the dweller in Goloka was born in Vṛṇdāvan as the daughter of Vṛṣabānu. However, according to the number of letters of the *mantras* that are mentioned in this chapter, *purascharana* is to be made and *homa*, one-tenth of *purascharana*, is to be then performed. The *homa* is to be done with ghee, honey, and milk; the three sweet things mixed with *til* and with devotion."

45. Nārada said: "O Bhagavān; Now describe the *stotra-mantra* by which the Devī is pleased."

46-100. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! Now I am saying the Rādhā-*stotra*. Listen.

"O Thou, the Highest Deity, the dweller in *rāsa-maṇḍalam!* I bow down to Thee; O Thou, the chief directrix of the *rāsa-maṇḍalam*; O Thou dearer to Kṛṣṇa than His life even, I bow down to Thee. O Thou, the Mother of the three *lokas!* O Thou the Ocean of mercy! Be pleased. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and the

other Devas bow down before Thy lotus feet. Thou art Sarasvatī; Thou art Savitrī; Thou art Śaṅkarī; I bow down to Thee; Thou art Gaṅgā; Thou art Padmāvatī; Thou art Śāsthī; Thou art Maṅgalā Caṇḍikā; Thou art Manasā; Thou art Tulasī; Thou art Durgā; Thou art Bhagavatī; Thou art Lakṣmī; Thou art all, I bow down to Thee. Thou art the Mūla-Prakṛti; Thou art the Ocean of mercy. Obeisance to Thee! Be merciful to us and save us from this ocean of *saṁsāra* (round of birth and death)."

O Nārada! Anybody who remembers Rādhā and reads this *stotra* three times a day does not feel the want of anything in this world. He will ultimately go to Goloka and remain in the *rāsa-maṇḍalam*. O child, this great secret ought never to be given out to any.

Now I am telling you the method of worship of the Durgā Devī. Hear. When any one remembers Durgā in this world, all his difficulties and troubles are removed. It is not seen that anybody does not remember Durgā. She is the object of worship of all. She is the Mother of all and the wonderful Śakti of Mahādeva. She is the presiding Deity of the intellect (*buddhi*) of all and She controls the hearts of all and She removes the great difficulties and dangers of all. Therefore She is named Durgā in the world. She is worshipped by all, whether a Śaiva or a Vaiṣṇava. She is the Mūla-Prakṛti; and from Her, the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe proceed. O Nārada! Now I am saying the principal nine lettered Durgā *mantra*, the best of all the *mantras:* ***aiṁ hṛīṁ klīṁ cāmundāyai vicce*** is the nine lettered *bīja-mantra* of Śrī Durgā; it is like a *kalpa-vṛkṣa* yielding all desires. One should worship this *mantra* by all means. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśa are the Ṛṣis of this *mantra;* Gāyatrī, Usnik and Anusthubha are the *chhandas;* Mahākālī, Mahā-Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī are the Devatās; Rakta Dantikā, Durgā, and Bhrāmarī are the *bījas*. Nandā, Sākambharī, and Bhīmā are the Śaktis and *dharma* (virtue), *artha* (wealth) and *kāma* (desires), are the places of application (*viniyoga*). Assign the head to the Ṛṣi of the *mantra* (*nyāsa*); assign the *chhandas* to the mouth and assign the Devatā to the heart. Then assign the Śakti to the right breast for the success and assign the *bīja* to the left breast.

Then perform the *sadaṅga-nyāsa* as follows:

aiṁ hridayāya namaḥ
hṛīṁ śirase svāhā
klīṁ śikhāyām vasat
cāmundāyai kavachāya hum
vichche netrābhyām vausat
aiṁ hṛīṁ klīṁ cāmundāyai vicce
karatalapṛṣihābhyām phaṭ

Next say, while touching the corresponding parts of the body:

aiṁ namaḥ śikhāyām, hṛīṁ namaḥ on the right eye
klīṁ namaḥ on the left eye
chām namaḥ on the right ear
mum namaḥ on the left ear
ndam namaḥ on the nostrils
vim namaḥ on the face
chchem namaḥ on the anus
aiṁ hṛīṁ klīṁ cāmundāyai vicce on the whole body

Then do the meditation (*dhyān*) thus:

"O Chāmunde! Thou art holding in Thy ten hands ten weapons, viz., *khadga* (axe), *chakra* (disc), *gadā* (club), *vāna* (arrows), *chāpa* (bow), *parigha, sūla* (spear), *bhūśundī, kapāla*, and *khadga*. Thou art Mahā-Kālī; Thou art three-eyed; Thou art decked with various ornaments. Thou shinest like *lilānjan* (a kind of black pigment). Thou hast ten faces and ten feet. The lotus-born Brahmā chanted hymns to Thee for the destruction of Madhu Kaitabha; I bow down to Thee."

Thus one should meditate on Mahā-Kālī, of the nature of *kāma-bīja* (the source whence will comes). Then the *dhyānam* of Mahā-Lakṣmī runs as follows:

"O Mahā-Lakṣmī, the destroyer of Mahisāsura! Thou holdest the garland of *aksa* (a kind of seed), *paraśu* (a kind of axe), *gadā* (club), *isu* (arrows), *kuliśa* (the thunderbolt) *padmā* (Lotus), *dhanu* (bow), *kundikā* (a student's waterpot), *kāmaṇḍalū*, *danda* (rod for punishment), *śakti* (a kind of weapon), *asi* (sword), *charma* (shield), *padmā* (a kind of waterlily), *ghantā* (bell,) *śurāpātra* (a pot to hold liquor), *śūla* (pickaxe), *pāśa* (noose) and *sudarsana* (disc weapon). Thy color is of the rising Sun. Thou art seated on the red lotus. Thou art of the nature *māyā-bīja* (the source whence female energy comes). So obeisance to Thee! (The *bīja* and the Devī are one and identical)

Next comes the *dhyānam* of Mahā-Sarasvatī as follows:

"O Mahā Sarasvatī! Thou holdest bell, pickaxe, plough (*hala*), conchshell, *musala* (a kind of club), *sudarśana*, bow and arrows. Thy color is like a *kuṇḍa* flower; Thou art the destroyer of Śumbha and the other Daityas; Thou art of the nature of *vānī-bīja* (the source whence knowledge, speech comes). Thy body is filled with everlasting existence, intelligence and bliss. Obeisance to Thee!"

O Nārada! Now I am going to describe the *yantra* of Mahā-Sarasvatī. Listen. First draw a triangle. Draw inside the triangle eight-petalled lotus having twenty-four leaves. Within this draw the house. Then on the *yantra* thus drawn, or in the *śālagrāma* stone, or in the jar, or in image, or in the *vāna-liṅgam*, or on the Sun, one should worship the Devī with oneness of heart. Then worship the *pītha*, the deities seated also on the dais, i.e., Jayā, Vījayā, Ajitā, Aghorā, Maṅgalā and other Pītha Śaktis. Then worship the attendant deities called *āvarana-pūjā:* Brahmā with Sarasvatī on the east, Nārāyaṇa with Lakṣmī on the Nairirit corner, Śaṅkara with Pārvatī on the Vāyu corner, the Lion on the north of the Devī, and Mahāsura on the left side of the Devī; finally worship Mahisa (buffalo). Next worship Nandajā, Raktadantā, śakambharī, Śivā, Durgā, Bhīmā, and Bhrāmarī. Then on the eight petals worship Brahmā, Maheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaisnavī, Vārāhī, Nāra Simhī, Aindrī, and Chāmundā. Next commencing from the leaf in front of the Devī, worship on the twenty-four leaves Viṣṇu Māyā, Chetanā, Buddhi, Nidrā (sleep), hunger, shadow, Śakti, thirst, peace, species (Jāti), modesty,

faith, fame, Lakṣmī (wealth), fortitude, Vriti, śruti, memory, mercy, Tusti, Pusti (nourishment), Bhrānti (error) and other Mātṛkās. Next on the corners of the Bhūpura (gates of the *yantra*), Gaṇeśa Kṣetrapālas, Vatuka and Yogīnīs are to be worshipped. Then on the outside of that Indra and the other Devas furnished with weapons are to be worshipped as per the aforesaid rules. For the satisfaction of the world Mother, various nice offerings and articles like those given by the royal personages are to be presented to the Mother; then the *mantra* is to be repeated, understanding its exoteric and esoteric meanings. Then *Saptaśati-stitra* (*Chandī-pātha*) is to be repeated before the Devī. There is no other *stotra* like this in the three worlds. Thus Durgā, the Deity of the Devas, is to be appeased every day. He who does this gets within his easy reach *dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa*, the four main objects of human pursuits (virtue, wealth, enjoyment and final beatitude).

O Nārada! Thus I have described to you the method of worship of the Devī Durgā. People get by this what they want. Hari, Brahmā, and all the Devas, Manus, Munis, the *yogīs* full of knowledge, the *āśramīs*, Lakṣmī and the other Devas all meditate on Śivānī. One's birth is attained with success at the remembrance of Durgā. The fourteen Manus have got their Manuship and the Devas their own rights by meditating on the lotus feet of Durgā. O Nārada! Thus I have described to you the very hidden histories of the five Prakṛtis and their parts. Then, verily, the four objects of human pursuits *dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa* are obtained by hearing this. He who has no sons gets sons, who has no learning gets learning and whoever wants anything gets that if he hears this.

The Devī Jagaddhātrī becomes certainly pleased with him who reads with his mind concentrated on this for nine nights before the Devī. The Devī becomes obedient to him who daily reads one chapter of this Ninth *Skandha* and the reader also does what is acceptable to the Devī. To ascertain beforehand what effects, merits or demerits, would accrue from reading this Bhāgavata, it is necessary by examining through the hands of a virgin girl or a Brāhmaṇa child, the auspicious or inauspicious signs. First make a

saṅkalpa (resolve) and worship the *Skandha*. Then bow down again and again to the Devī Durgā. Then bring there a virgin girl, bathed well and worship her duly and have a golden pencil fixed duly in her hand placed in the middle on the body. Then calculate the auspicious or inauspicious effects, as the case may be, from the curves made by that pencil. So the effects of reading this Bhāgavata would be. If the virgin girl be indifferent in fixing the pencil within the area drawn, know the result of reading the Bhāgavata would be similar. There is no doubt about this.

Here ends the Fiftieth Chapter of the Ninth Skandha on the Glory of Śakti in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa. Here ends the Ninth Skandha.

Tenth Skandha

Chapter I—the Story of Svāyambhuva Manu

1-6. Nārada said: "O Nārāyaṇa! O Thou, the supporter of this whole world! The preserver of all! Thou hast described the glorious expansions of the Devī, Who take away all sins. Kindly describe now to me the several forms that the Devī assumed in every *manvantara* in this world, as well as Her Divine greatness. O Thou, full of mercy! Describe also how and by whom She was worshipped and praised; how She, so kind to the devotees, having been thus pleased, fulfilled their desires. I am very eager to hear these, the very best and blissful expansions of the Devī."

Śrī Nārāyaṇa said: "Hear, O Mahārṣi! the glories and greatness of Devī Bhagavatī leading to the devotion of the devotees, capable of giving all sorts of wealth and destroying all sins. From the navel lotus of Viṣṇu, the holder of the *chakra* (discus), was born Brahmā, the creator of this universe, the great energetic one, and the Grandsire of all the worlds.

7-14. The four-faced Brahmā, on being born, produced from His mind Svāyambhuva Manu and his wife Śatarūpā, the embodiment of all virtues. For this very reason, Svāyambbuva Manu has been known as the mind-born son of Brahmā. Svāyambhuva Manu got from Brahmā the task to create and multiply; he made an earthen image of Devī Bhagavatī, the bestower of all fortunes, on the beach of the sanctifying *kṣīra-samudra* (ocean of milk), engaged himself in worshipping Her, and began to repeat the principal mystic *mantra* of Vāgbhava (the Deity of speech). Thus engaged in worship, Svāyambhuva Manu conquered by and by his breath and food, observed *yama-niyama* and other vows and became lean and thin. For one hundred years he remained standing always on one leg and became successful in controlling his six passions lust, anger, etc. He meditated on the feet of that Ādyā-Śakti (the primordial Śakti) so much that he became inert like a vegetable or mineral matter.

By his *tapas* the Devī, the world Mother appeared before him and said: 'O King! Ask Divine boons from Me.' Hearing these joyous words, the King wanted his long-cherished and heartfelt boon, so very rare to the Devas.

15-22. Manu said: 'O large-eyed Devī! Victory to Thee, residing in the hearts of all! O Thou honored, worshipped! O Thou! the upholdress of the world! O Thou, the auspicious of all auspicious! By Thy gracious glance, the lotus-born has been able to create the worlds, Viṣṇu is perserving and Rudra Deva is destroying in a minute. By Thy command it is that Indra, the Lord of Śachī, has got the charge of controlling the three *lokas;* and Yama, the Lord of the departed, is awarding fruits and punishing the deceased ones according to their merits or demerits. O Mother! By Thy Grace Varuṇa, the holder of the noose, has become the lord of all aquatic creatures and is preserving them; and Kuvera, the lord of the Yakṣas, has become the lord of wealth. Agṇi (fire), Nairrit, Vāyu (wind), Īśāna and Ananta Deva are Thy parts, and have grown by Thy power. Then, O Devī! If Thou desirest to grant me my desired boon, then, O Thou! the auspicious One! Let all the great obstacles to my work of procreating in this universe and increasing my dominions die away. And if anybody worships this great Vāgbhava-*mantra* or anybody hears with devotion this history or makes others hear this, they all shall be crowned with success and enjoyment and *mukti* be easy to them.

23-24. Specially they would get the power to remember their past lives, acquire eloquence in speaking, all-round beauty, success in obtaining knowledge, success in their deeds and especially in the increase of their posterity and children. O Bhagavatī! This is what I want most.'

Here ends the First Chapter of the Tenth Skandha on the story of Svāyambhuva Manu in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter II—Conversation between Nārada and Bindhya Mountain

1-6. The Devī said: "O King! O Mighty armed One! All these I grant unto you. Whatever you have asked for, I give them to you. I am very much pleased with your hard *tapasyā* and with your *japam* of the Vāgbhava-*mantra*. Know that My power is infallible in killing the Lords of the Daityas. O child! Let your kingdom be free from enemies and let your prosperity be increased. Let your devotion be fixed on Me, and in the end you will verily get Nirvāṇa Mukti."

"O Nārada! Thus granting the boon to the high-souled Manu, the Great Devī disappeared before him and went to the Bindhya Range. O Devaṛṣi! This Bindhya mountain increased in height so much so that it was well nigh on the way to prevent the course of the Sun when it was arrested by Mahārsi Agastya, born of a *kumbha* (water jar). The younger sister of Viṣṇu, Varadeśvarī, is staying here as Bindhyavāsinī. O best of the Munis! This Devī is an object of worship of all."

7-8. Saunaka and the other Ṛṣis said: "O Sūta! Who is that Bindhya Mountain? And why did He intend to soar high up to the heavens to resist the Sun's course? And why was it that Agastya, the son of Mitrā Varuṇa quieted that rising mountain? Kindly describe all these in detail.

9-15. O Saint! We are not as yet satisfied with hearing the Glories of the Devī, the ambrosial nectar, that have come out of your mouth. Rather our thirst has been increased."

Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! There was the Bindhya Mountain, highly honored and reckoned as the chief of the mountains on the earth. It was covered with big forests and big trees. Creeping plants and shrubs flowered there, and it looked very beautiful. On it were roaming deer, wild boars, buffaloes, monkeys, hares, foxes, tigers and bears, stout and cheerful, with full vigor and all very merrily. The Devas, Gandharvhas, Apsarās and Kinnaras came there and bathe in its rivers; all sorts of fruit trees can be seen there. On

such a beautiful Bindhya Mountain, came there one day the ever-joyful Devaṛṣi Nārada on his voluntary tour round the world. Seeing the Mahārsi Nārada, the Bindhya Mountain got up and worshipped him with *pādya* and *arghya* and gave him a very good *āsana* to sit. When the Muni took his seat and found himself happy, the Mountain began to speak.

16-17. Bindhya said: 'O Devaṛṣi! Now be pleased to say whence you are coming; your coming here is so very auspicious! My house is sanctified today by your coming. O Deva! Your wandering is, like the Sun, the cause of inspiring the beings with freedom from fear. So, O Nārada! kindly give out your intention as to your coming here which seems rather wonderful.'

18-28. Nārada said: 'O Bindhya! O enemy of Indra! (Once the mountains had a very great influence. Indra cut off their wings and so destroyed their influence. Hence the mountains are enemies of Indra). I am coming from the Sumeru Mountain. There I saw the nice abodes of Indra, Agṇi, Yama, and Varuṇa. There I saw the houses of these Dikpālas (the Regents of the several quarters) which abound in objects of all sorts of enjoyments.'

Thus saying, Nārada gave out a heavy sigh. Bindhya, the king of mountains, seeing the Muni heaving a long sigh, asked him again with great eagerness, 'O Devaṛṣi! Why have you heaved such a long sigh? Kindly say.'

Hearing this, Nārada said: 'O child! Hear the cause why I sighed. See! The Himālaya Mountain is the father of Gaurī and the father-in-law of Mahādeva; therefore he is the most worshipped of all the mountains. The Kailāśa Mountain again, is the residence of Mahādeva; hence that is also worshipped and chanted as capable of destroying all the sins. So the Nisadha, Nīla, and Gandhamādana and other mountains are worshipped at their own places. What more than this, that the Sumeru Mountain, round whom the thousand-rayed Sun, the Soul of the universe, circumambulates along with the planets and stars, thinks himself the supreme and greatest amongst the mountains, "I am the supreme; there is none like me in the three worlds." Remembering this self-conceit of Sumeru, I sighed so

heavily. O Bindhya! We are asceties and though we have no need to discuss these things, yet by way of conversation I have told this to you. Now I go to my own abode.'

Here ends the Second Chapter of the Tenth Skandha on the conversation between Nārada and the Bindhya Mountain in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter III—Obstruction of the Sun's course by the Bindhya Mountain

1-16. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! Thus advising, the Devaṛṣi, the great *jñanī* and Muni going wherever he likes, went to Brahmaloka. After the Muni had gone, Bindhya became immersed in great anxiety and becoming always very sorrowful, could not get peace. 'What shall I do now so as to overthrow Meru? Until I do that, I won't be able to get the peace of my mind or my health. The high-souled persons always praised me for my enthusiasm and energy. Fie to my energy, honor, fame and family! Fie to my strength and heroism!'

O Ṛṣis! With all these cogitations in his mind, Bindhya came finally to this crooked conclusion: 'Daily the Sun, stars and planets circumambulate round Sumeru; hence Sumeru is always so arrogant; now if I can resist the Sun's course in the heavens by my peaks, He will not be able to circumambulate round Sumeru. If I can do this, certainly I will be able to curb Sumeru in his pride.'

Thus coming to a conclusion, Bindhya raised his arms that were the peaks high up to the heavens and blocking the passage in the heavens, remained so and passed that night with great uneasiness and difficulty, thinking when the Sun would rise and he would obstruct His passage. At last, when the morning broke out, all the quarters were clear. The Sun, destroying the darkness, rose in *udaya-giri*. The sky looked clear with His rays; the lotus, seeing Him, blew out with joy; while the excellent white water-lilies, at the

bereavement of the Moon, contracted their leaves and closed as if at the separation of one's lover, gone to a distant place. The people began to do their own works on the appearance of the day; the worship of the gods, the offerings to the Gods, the *homas* and the offerings to the Pitṛs were going on (in the morning, afternoon and evening respectively). The Sun marched on in His course. He divided the day into three parts, morning, midday, and afternoon. First of all he consoled the eastern quarter which seemed like a woman suffering from the bereavement of her lover; then he consoled the southeastern corner; then as He wanted to go quickly towards the south, His horses could not go further. The charioteer Aruna, seeing this, informed the Sun what had happened.

17. Aruna spoke: 'O Sun! Bindhya has become very jealous of the Sumeru as You circumambulate round the Sumeru Mountain daily. He has risen very high and obstructed your course in the heavens, hoping that you would circumambulate round him. He is thus vying with the Sumeru Mountain.'

18-26. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! Hearing the words of Aruna, the charioteer, the Sun began to think thus: 'Oh! Bindhya is going to obstruct My course! What can a great hero not do, when he is in the wrong path? Oh! My horses' motions are stopped today! Fate is the strongest of all. Because Bindhya is strong today by Daiva, therefore he is doing this. Even when eclipsed by Rāhu (the ascending node) I do not stop for a moment even; and now obstructed in My passage, I am waiting here for a long time. The Daiva is powerful; what can I do?'

The Sun's course having been thus obstructed, all from the Gods to the lowest became helpless and could not make out what to do. Citragupta and others ascertain their time through the Sun's course; and that Sun is now rendered motionless by the Bindhya mountain! What a great adverse fate is this! When the Sun was thus obstructed by the Bindhya out of his arrogance, the sacrifices to the Devas, the offerings to the Pitṛs all were stopped; the world was going to rack and ruin. The people that lived on the west and south had their nights prolonged and they remained asleep. The

people of the east and the north were scorched by the strong rays of the Sun and some of them died; some of them lost their health and so forth. The whole earth became devoid of *śrāddhas* and worship, and a cry of universal distress arose on all sides. Indra and the other Devas became very anxious and began to think what they should do at that moment."

Here ends the Third Chapter of the Tenth Skandha on the obstruction of the Sun's course by the Bindhya Mountain in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18000 verses by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IV—the Devas go to Mahādeva

1-2. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! Then Indra and all the other Devas, taking Brahmā along with them and placing Him at the front, went to Mahādeva and took His refuge. They bowed down to Him and chanted sweet and great hymns to Him, Who holds Moon on His forehead, Deva of the Devas, thus:

3-5. 'O Thou, the leader of the host of Gods! Victory to Thee! O Thou, Whose lotus feet are served by Umā, Victory to Thee! O Thou, the Giver of the eight *siddhis* and *vibhūtis* (extraordinary powers) to Thy devotees, Victory to Thee! O Thou, the background of this great theatrical dance of insurmountable *māyā!* Thou art the supreme spirit in Thy true nature! Thou ridest on Thy vehicle, the Bull, and residest in Kāilāśa; yet Thou art the Lord of all the Devas. O Thou, Whose ornament is snakes, Who art the most honored and the giver of honors to persons! O Thou! the unborn, yet comprising all forms, O Thou Śambhu! that findest pleasure in this Thy own Self! Victory to Thee!

6-9. O Thou, the Lord of Thy attendants! O Thou, Giriśa! The giver of the great powers, praised by Mahā-Viṣṇu! O Thou, That livest in the heart lotus of Viṣṇu, and deeply absorbed in *mahā-yoga!* Obeisance to Thee! O Thou that can'st be known through *yoga*, and nothing but the *yoga* itself; Thou, the Lord of *yoga!* We bow down to Thee. Thou awardest the fruits of *yoga* to the *yogīns*. O Thou, the Lord of the helpless! The incarnation of the ocean of mercy! The relief of the diseased and the most powerful! O Thou, whose

forms are the three *guṇas: sattva, rajas* and *tamas!* O Thou Whose emblem (carrier) is the bull (*dharma*); Thou art verily the great *kāla;* yet Thou art the Lord of *kāla!* Obeisance to Thee!'

10. Thus praised by the Devas who take the offerings in sacrifices, the Lord of the Devas, whose emblem is the bull, smilingly told the Devas in a deep voice:

11. 'O Thou, the excellent Devas! The residents of the heavens! I am pleased with the praises that you have sung of Me. I will fulfil the desires of you, all the Devas.'

12-15. The Devas said: 'O Lord of all the Devas! O Giriśa! Thou whose forehead is adorned with Moon! O Thou, the doer of good to the distressed. O Thou, the powerful! Dost Thou do good to us. O Thou, the sinless One! The Bindhya Mountain has become jealous of the Sumeru Mountain, and has risen very high up in the heavens and obstructed the Sun's course, thereby causing great troubles to all. O Thou, the doer of good to all! O Īśāna! Dost Thou check the mountain's abnormal rise. How can we fix time if the Sun's course be obstructed? And when there is no knowledge what time it is, the sacrifices to the Devas and the offerings to the Pitṛs are now almost dead and gone. O Deva! Who will now protect us? We see Thee as the destroyer of our fear and of those who are terrified. O Deva! O Lord of Giriśā! Be pleased with us.'

16-18. Śrī Bhagavān said: 'O Devas! I have no power to curb the Bindhya Mountain. Let us go to the Lord of Ramā and pay our respects to Him. He is our Lord, fit to be worshipped. He is Govinda, Bhagavān Viṣṇu, the cause of all causes. We will go to Him and tell Him all our sorrows. He will remove them.'

19. Hearing thus the words of Girīśa, Indra and the other Devas with Brahmā placed Mahādeva at their front, and went to the region of Vaikuṇṭha, trembling with fear."

Here ends the Fourth Chapter of the Tenth Skandha on the going of the Devas to Mahādeva in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter V—the Devas go to Viṣṇu

1-5. Sūta said: "Then the Devas, on arriving at Vaikuṇṭha, saw the Lord of Lakṣmī, Deva of the Devas, the World Teacher, with his eyes beautiful like *padmā-palāsa* (lotus leaves) shining with brilliance, and began to praise Him in a voice choked with intense feelings of devotion, thus: 'Victory to Viṣṇu! O Lord of Ramā! Thou art prior to the *virāt-puruṣa*. O enemy of the Daityas! O Thou, the generator of desires in all and the bestower of the fruits of those desires to all! O Govinda! Thou art the great Boar, and Thou art of the nature of great sacrifices! O Mahā-Viṣṇu! O Lord of *dharma!* Thou art the cause of the origin of this world! Thou didst support the earth in Thy Fish incarnation for the deliverance of the *Vedas!* O Thou, Satyavrata of the form of a Fish! We bow down to Thee. O Thou! The enemy of the Daityas! The ocean of mercy! Thou dost do the actions of the Devas out of mercy. O Thou! the Tortoise incarnation! That grantest *mukti* to others! Obeisance to Thee!

6-18. O Thou! that didst assume the form of a Boar for the destruction of the Daityas Jaya and others and for raising the earth from the waters! Obeisance to Thee! Thou didst assume that form, half man and half Lion of the *nṛṣimha-mūrti* and tore asunder Hiraṅyakaśipu, proud of his boons, by Thy nails. We bow down to Thee! Obeisance to Thee! That in Thy Dwarf incarnation, didst deceive Bali, whose head got crazed by the acquisition of the kingdom over the three *lokas*. We bow down to Thee, that in Thy Paraśurāma incarnation, didst slay Kārta Vīryāryuna, the thousand-handed, and the other wicked *kṣatriyas!* Obeisance to Thee! That wert born of the womb of Renukā as the son of Jamadagṇi. Obeisance to Thee, of great prowess and valor, that in Thy Rāma incarnation as the son of Daśaratha, didst cut off the heads of the wicked Rākṣasa, the son of Pulastya! We bow down again and again to Thee, the Great Lord, that in

Thy Kṛṣṇa incarnation, didst deliver this earth from the clutches of the wicked King Duryodhana, Kaṁsa and others and didst establish religion by removing then prevailing vicious ideas and doctrines. We bow down to Thy Buddha incarnation, that great Deva who didst come down here to put a stop to the slaughtering of the innocent animals and to the performance of the wicked sacrificial ceremonies! Obeisance to the Deva! When almost all the persons in this world will turn out in future as *mlecchas* and when the wicked Kings will oppress them, right and left, Thou wilt then incarnate Thyself again as Kalki and redress all the grievances! We bow down to Thy Kalki form! O Deva! These are Thy ten incarnations are for the preservation of Thy devotees and for killing the wicked Daityas. Therefore Thou art called the great reliever of all our troubles. O Thou! Victory to Thee! The Deva Who assumest the forms of women and water for destroying the ailings of the devotees! Who else can be so kind? O Thou, the Ocean of mercy!'

O Ṛṣis! Thus praising the yellow-robed Viṣṇu, the Lord of all the Devas, the whole host of the Devas bowed down to Him and made *śāstāṅgas*. Then Viṣṇu Gadādhara, hearing their hymns, gladdened them and spoke:

19-27. Śrī Bhagavāna said: 'O Devas! I am pleased with your *stotra*. You need not be sorrowful. I will remove all your troubles that have become unbearable to you. O Devas! I am very glad to hear the praises that you have offered on Me. Better ask boons from Me. I will grant them, though very rare even and obtained with difficulty. Any person who rises early in the morning and recites with devotion this *stotra* sung by you, will never experience any sorrow. O Devas! No poverty, no bad symptoms, no *vetālas* nor planets nor *brahma-rākṣasas* nor any misfortunes will overtake him. No disease, due to *vāta* (windy temperament), *pitta* (bile) and *kapha* (phlegm) nor untimely death will visit him. His family will not be extinct and happiness will always reign there. O Devas! This *stotra* can give everything. Both enjoyment and freedom will come within anyone's easy access. There is no doubt about this. Nov what is your difficulty? I will remove it at once. There is not a bit of doubt in this.'

Hearing these words of Śrī Bhagavān, the Devas became glad and spoke to Viṣṇu."

Here ends the Fifth Chapter of the Tenth Skandha on the Devas' going to Viṣṇu, in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VI—the Devas Pray to Muni Agastya

1-6. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! Hearing the words of the Lord of Lakṣmī, all the Devas became pleased and they spoke. The Devas said:

'O Deva of the Devas! O Mahā-Viṣṇu! O Thou, the creator, preserver and destroyer of the Universe! O Viṣṇu! The Bindhya mountain has risen very high and has stopped the Sun's course. Therefore all the works on earth are suspended. We are not receiving our share of *yajñas*. Now where we will go, what we will do, we do not know.'

Śrī Bhagavān said: 'O Devas! There is now in Benares the Muni Agastya of indomitable power, in devoted service of that primordial Śakti Bhagavatī, the creatrix of this universe. This Muni alone can put a stop to this abnormal Bindhya Range. Therefore it behoves you all to go to that fiery Dvija Agastya at Benares where the people get *nirvāṇa;* the highest place and pray to him (to kindly fulfil your object).'

7-19. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! Thus ordered by Viṣṇu, the gods felt themselves comforted and, saluting Him, went to the city of Benares. In a moment they went to the holy city of Benares, and bathing there at the Maṇikarnikā *ghāt*, worshipped the Devas with devotion, offered *tarpanas* to the Pitṛs and duly made their charities. Then they went to the excellent *āśrama* of the Muni Agastya. The hermitage was full of quiet quadruped animals; adorned with various trees, peacocks, herons, geese and *chakravākas* and various other birds, tigers, wolves, deer, wild boars, rhinoceros, young elephants, *ruru* deer and others. Though there were the ferocious animals, yet the place was free from fear and it looked exceedingly beautiful. On arriving before

the Muni, the gods fell prostrate before him and bowed down again and again to him. They then chanted hymns to him and said:

'O Lord of Dvijas! O Thou honored and most worshipful! Victory to Thee. Thou art sprung from a water jar. Thou art the destroyer of the Asura Vātāpī. Obeisance to Thee! O Thou, full of Śrī, the son of Mitrā Varuṇa! Thou art the husband of Lopāmudrā. Thou art the storehouse of all knowledge. Thou art the source of all the *śāstras*. Obeisance to Thee! At Thy rise, the waters of the ocean become bright and clear; so obeisance to Thee! At Thy rise (of the star Canopus) the *kāśa* flower blossoms. Thou art adorned with clots of matted hair on Thy head and Thou always livest with Thy disciples. Śrī Rāmachandra is one of Thy chief disciples. O great Muni! Thou art entitled to praise from all the Devas! O best! The storehouse of all qualities! O great Muni! We now bow down to Thee and Thy wife Lopāmudrā! O Lord! O very energetic! We all are very much tormented by an unbearable pain inflicted on us by the Bindhya Range and we therefore take refuge of Thee. Be gracious unto us.'

Thus praised by the gods, the highly religious Muni Agastya, the twice born, smiled and graciously said:

20-27. 'O Devas! You are the lords of the three worlds, superior to all, high-souled, and the preserver of the *lokas*. If you wish, you can favor, disfavor, or do anything. Especially He who is the Lord of heavens, whose weapon is the thunderbolt, and the eight *siddhis* are ever at his service is your Indra, the Lord of the Devas. What is there that he cannot do? Then there is Agṇi, who burns everything and always carries oblations to the gods and the Pitṛs, who is the mouth piece of the Devas. Is there anything impracticable with him? O Devas! Then again Yama is there amongst you, the Lord of the Rākṣasas, the witness of all actions, and always quick in giving punishment to the offenders, that terrible-looking Yama Rāja. What is there that he cannot accomplish? Still, O Devas! if there be anything required by you that awaits my co-operation, tell it at once and I will do it undoubtedly.'

Hearing these words of the Muni, the Devas became very glad and joyfully began to say what they wanted. 'O Mahārsi! The Bindhya mountain has risen very high and thwarted the Sun's course in the heavens. A cry of universal distress and consternation has arisen, and the three worlds are now verging on ruin. O Muni! Now what we want is this that Thou, by Thy power of *tapas*, curbest the rise of this Bindhya Mountain. O Agastya! Certainly, by thy fire and austerities, that mountain will be brought down and humiliated. This is what we want.'

Here ends the Sixth Chapter of the Tenth Skandha on the Devas' praying to the Muni Agastya for checking the abnormal rise of the Bindhya Range in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VII—Checking the Rise of Bindhya

1-21. Sūta said: "Hearing the words of the Devas, Agastya, the best of the Brāhmaṇas, promised that he would carry out their works. O Ṛṣis! All the Devas then became very glad when the Muni, born of the water jar, promised thus. They then bade goodbye to him and went back gladly to their own abodes.

The Muni then spoke to his wife thus: 'O daughter of the King! The Bindhya Mountain has baffled the progress of the Sun's course and has thus caused a great mischief. What the Munis, the seers of truths said before referring to Kāśī, all are now coming to my mind when I am thinking why this disturbance has overtaken me. They said that "Various hindrances would come to him at every step, who is a *sādhu* intending to settle at Kāśī. Let him who wants *mukti* never quit Kāśī, the *avimukta* place, in any case." But, O Dear! Today I have got one hindrance during my stay at Kāśī.'

Thus talking with much regret on various subjects with his wife, the Muni bathed in the Maṇikarnikā *ghāt*, saw the Lord Viśveśvara, worshipped Dandapānī and went to the Kāla-Bhairava. He said in the following terms: 'O Mighty armed Kāla-Bhairava! Thou destroyest the fear of the *bhaktas;*

Thou art the God of this Kāśī city. Then why art Thou driving me away from this Kāśī-*dhām?* O Lord! Thou removest all the obstacles of the devotees and Thou preservest them. Then why, O destroyer of the sorrows of the *bhaktas*, art Thou removing me from here? Never I blamed others; nor did I practice any hypocrisy with any person nor did I lie; then under what sin, Thou art driving me away from Kāśī?'

O Ṛṣis! Thus praying to Kāla Bhairava, the Muni Agastya, born of water jar and the husband of Lopāmudrā, went to Sāksi Gaṇeśa, the destroyer of all evils and seeing and worshipping Him, went out of Kāśī and proceeded to the south. The Muni, the ocean of great fortune, left Kāśī; but he became very much distressed to leave it and he remembered it always. He began to march on with his wife. As if riding on his car of asceticism he arrived at the Bindhya Mountain in the twinkling of an eye, and saw that the mountain had risen very high and obstructed the passage of the Sun in the heavens. The Bindhya Mountain, seeing the Muni Agastya in front, began to tremble, and as if desirous to speak something to the earth in a whisper, became low and dwarfish, bowed down to the Muni and fell down with devotion in *sāstāṅgas* with devotion, just like a stick dropped flat on the ground before the Muni. Seeing the Bindhya thus low, the Muni Agastya became pleased and spoke with a gracious look: 'O child! Better remain in this state until I come back. For, O child! I am quite unable to ascend to your lofty heights.'

Thus saying, the Muni became eager to go to the south; and, crossing the peaks of the Bindhya, alighted gradually again to the plains. He went on further to the south and saw the Śrī Śaila Mountain and at last went to the Malayāchala and there, building his *āśrama* (hermitage), settled himself. O Saunaka! The Devī Bhagavatī, worshipped by the Muni went to the Bindhya Mountain and settled there and became known, in the three worlds, by the name of Bindhyavāsinī.

22-26. Sūta said: "Anybody who hears this highly pure narrative of the Muni Agastya and Bindhya, becomes freed of all his sins. All his enemies are destroyed in no time. This hearing gives knowledge to the Brāhmaṇas,

victory to the Kṣatriyas, wealth and corn to the Vaiśyas and happiness to the Śūdras.

If anybody once hears this narrative, he gets *dharma* if he wants *dharma*, gets unbounded wealth if he wants wealth and gets all desires if he wants his desires fulfilled. In ancient times Svāyambhuva Manu worshipped this Devī with devotion and got his kingdom for his own Manvantara period. O Saunaka! Thus I have described to you the holy character of the Devī in this *manvantara*. What more shall I say? Mention please."

Here ends the Seventh Chapter of the Tenth Skandha on the checking of the rise of the Bindhya Range in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VIII—the Origin of Manu

1. Saunaka said: "O Sūta! You have described the beautiful narrative of the first Manu Svāyambhuva. Now kindly describe to us the narratives of other highly energetic Deva-like Manus."

2-3. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! The very wise Nārada, well-versed in the knowledge of Śrī Devī, hearing the glorious character of the first Svāyambhuva Manu, became desirous to hear of the other Manus and asked the Eternal Nārāyaṇa: 'O Deva! Now favor me by reciting the origin and narratives of the other Manus.'

4. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Devaṛṣi! I have already spoken to you everything regarding the first Manu. He had worshipped the Devī Bhagavatī, and thus he got his foeless kingdom. You know that then.

5-24 Manu had two sons of great prowess, Priyavrata and Uttānapāda. They governed their kingdoms with fame. The son of this Priyavrata, of indomitable valor, is known by the wise as the second Svārochisa Manu. Dear to all the beings, this Svārochisa Manu built his hermitage near the banks of the Kālindī (the Yamuṇā) and there making an earthen image of

the Devī Bhagavatī, worshipped the Devī with devotion, subsisting on dry leaves and thus practiced severe austerities. Thus he passed twelve years in that forest; when, at last, the Devī Bhagavatī, resplendent with brilliance of the thousand Suns, became visible to him. She was very much pleased with his devotional *stotrams*. The Devī, the savior of the Devas, and who was of good vows, granted to him sovereignty for one *manvantara*. Thus the Devī became famous by the name Tārinī Jagaddhātrī. O Nārada! Thus, by worshipping the Devī Tārinī, Svārochisa obtained safely the foeless kingdom. Then establishing the *dharma* duly, he enjoyed his kingdom with his sons; and, when the period of his *manvantara* expired, he went to the heavens.

Priyavrata's son Uttama became the third Manu. On the banks of the Ganges, be practiced *tapasyā*, repeating the *bīja-mantra* of Vāgbhava in a solitary place for three years, and became blessed with the favor of the Devī. With rapt devotion he sang hymns wholly to the Devī with his mind full; and, by Her boon, got the foeless kingdom and a continual succession of sons and grandsons. Thus enjoying the pleasures of his kingdom and the gifts of the *yuga-dharma*, got in the end, the excellent place obtained by the best *rājarsis*. A very happy result.

Priyavarata's other son named Tāmasa became the fourth Manu. He practiced austerities and repeated the *kāma-bīja mantra* (*klīṁ*) the spiritual password of Kāmadeva, on the southern banks of the Narmadā river and worshipped the World Mother. In the spring and in the autumn he observed the nine nights' vow (Navarātri) worshipped the excellent lotus-eyed Deveśī and pleased Her. On obtaining the Devī's favor, he chanted excellent hymns to Her and made *pranāms*. There he enjoyed the extensive kingdom without any fear from any foe or from any other source of danger. He generated ten sons in the womb of his wife, all very powerful and mighty, and then he departed to the excellent region in the heavens.

Raivata the younger brother of Tāmasa became the Fifth Manu, and practiced austerities on the banks of the Kālindī (Yamuṇā) and repeated the *kāma-bīja mantra*, the resort of the *sādhakas*, capable to give the highest

power of speech and to yield all the *siddhis*, and thus he worshipped the Devī. He obtained excellent heavens, indomitable power, unhampered and capable of all success and a continual line of sons, grandsons, etc. Then the unrivalled excellent hero Raivata Manu established the several divisions of *dharma* and enjoying all the worldly pleasures, went to the excellent region of Indra."

Here ends the Eighth Chapter of the Tenth Skandha on the origin of Manu in the Mahāpuranam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IX—the narrative of Chāksusa Manu

1-7. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! I will now narrate the supreme glories of the Devī and the anecdote how Manu, the son of Aṅga, obtained excellent kingdom by worshipping the Devī Bhagavatī. The son of the king Aṅga named Chāksusa became the Sixth Manu. One day he went to the Brahmārsi Pulaha Ṛṣi, and taking his refuge said: 'O Brahmārsi! Thou removest all the sorrows and afflictions of those that come under Thy refuge; I now take Thy refuge. Kindly advise Thy servant how he may become the Lord of an endless amount of wealth. O Muni! What can I do so that I may get the sole undisputed sway over the world? How my arms can wield the weapons and maṇipulate them so that they may not be baffled? How my race and line be constant and my youth remain ever the same, undecayed? And how can I, in the end, attain *mukti?* O Muni! Kindly dost Thou give instructions to me on these points and oblige.' Hearing thus, the Muni wanted him to worship the Devī and said: 'O King! Listen attentively to what I say you today. Worship today the all auspicious Śakti; by Her grace, all your desires will be fulfilled.'

8. Chāksusa said: 'O Muni! What is that very holy worship of Śrī Bhagavatī? How to do it? Kindly describe all these in detail.'

9-20. The Muni said: 'O King! I will now disclose all about the excellent pūjā of the Devī Bhagavatī. Hear. You recite (mentally) always the seed-*mantra* of Vākbhava (speech) ***śrīṁ***, the Deity being Mahā-Sarasvatī. If

anyone makes *japam* (recites slowly) of the Vākbhava-bīja thrice a day, one gets both the highest enjoyment here and, in the end, release (*mukti*). O son of a Kṣatriya! There is no other *bīja-mantra* (word) better than this of *vāk* (word). Through the *japam* of this *bīja-mantra* comes the increase of strength and prowess and all successes. By the *japam* of this, Brahmā is so powerful and has become the creator; Viṣṇu preserves the universe and Maheśvara has become the destroyer of the universe. The other Dikpālas (the Regents of the quarters) and the other *siddhas* have become very powerful by the power of this *mantra*, and are capable of favoring or disfavoring others. So, O King! You, too, worship the Devī of the Devas, the World Mother and ere long you will become the Lord of unbounded wealth. There is no doubt about this.'

O Nārada! Thus advised by Pulaha Ṛṣi, the son of the King Aṅga went to the banks of the Virajā River to practice austerities. There king Chāksusa remained absorbed in making *japam* of the Vākbhava *bīja-mantra* ***śrīṁ,*** and took for his food the leaves of the trees that dropped on the ground and thus practiced severe austerities.

The first year he ate leaves; the second year he drank only water and in the third year he sustained his life by simply breathing air, and thus remained steady like a pillar. Thus he remained without food for twelve years. He went on making japam of the Vākbhava *mantra* and his heart and mind became purified. While he was sitting alone, absorbed in the meditation of the Devī *mantra*, there appeared before him suddenly the Parameśvarī, the World Mother, the incarnation of Lakṣmī. The highest Deity, full of dauntless fire and the embodiment of all the Devas, spoke graciously in sweet words to Chāksusa, the son of Aṅga.

21-29. 'O Regent of the earth! I am pleased with your *tapasyā*. Now ask any boon that you want. I will give that to you.'

Chāksusa said: 'O Thou, worshipped by the Devas! O sovereign of the Deva of the Devas! Thou art the controller within; Thou art the controller without. Thou knowest everything I desire in my mind. Still, O Devī! When

I am so fortunate as to see Thee, I say Thou grantest me the kingdom for the *manvantara* period.'

The Devī said: 'O Best of the Kṣatriyas! I grant unto you the kingdom of the whole world for one *manvantara*. You will have many sons, very powerful indeed, and well qualified. Your kingdom will be free from any danger until at last you will certainly get *mukti*.'

Thus granting the excellent boon to Manu, She disappeared then and there, after being praised by Manu with deep devotion. The Sixth Manu, then favored by the Devī, enjoyed the sovereignty of the earth and other pleasures, and became the best of the Manus. His sons became the devotees of the Devī, very powerful and expert and became respected by all, and enjoyed the pleasures of the kingdom. Thus getting the supremacy by the worship of the Devī, the Chāksusa Manu became merged in the end in the holy feet of the Devī."

Here ends the Ninth Chapter of the Tenth Skandha on the narrative of Chāksusa Manu in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter X—the Anecdote of the King Suratha

1-4. Nārāyaṇa said: "Now the Seventh Manu is the Lord Vaivasvata Manu Śrāddha Deva, honored by all the kings, and the enjoyer of the highest bliss, *brāhmānanda*. I will now speak of this seventh Manu. He, too, practiced austerities before the highest Devī and by Her Grace, got the sovereignty of the earth for one *manvantara*.

The Eighth Manu is the Sun's son known as Sāvarni. This personage, a devotee of the Devī, honored by the kings, gentle, patient and powerful king Sāvarni worshipped the Devī in his previous births and, by Her boon, became the Lord of the *manvantara*."

5. Nārada said: "O Bhagavān! How did this Sāvarni Manu worship in his previous birth the earthen image of the Devī? Kindly describe this to me."

6-13. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! This eighth Manu had been, before, in the time of Svārochisa Manu (the second Manu), a famous king, known by the name of Suratha, born of the family of Chaitra and very powerful. He could well appreciate merits, clever in the science of archery, amassed abundance of wealth, a generous donor, a very liberal man and he was a celebrated poet honored by all. He was skilled in all arts of warfare with weapons, and indomitable in crushing his foes. Once on a time, some of his powerful enemies destroyed the city of Kolā, belonging to the revered king and succeeded in besieging his capital wherein he remained. Then the king Suratha, the conqueror of all his foes, went out to fight with the enemies but he was defeated by them. Taking advantage of this opportunity, the king's ministers robbed him of all his wealth. The illustrious king then went out of the city and with a sorrowful heart rode alone on his horse on the plea of hunting game and walked to and fro, as if absent-minded.

14-25. The king then went to the hermitage of the Muni Sumedhā, who could see far-reaching things. It was a nice quiet *āśrama*, surrounded by quiet and peaceful animals and filled with disciples. There in that very sacred *āśrama*, his heart became relieved and he went on living there.

One day, when the Muni finished his worship, etc., the king went to him, saluted him duly and humbly asked him the following: 'O Muni! I am suffering terribly from my mental pain. O Deva on the earth! Why I am suffering so much? Though I know everything, I am as if quite an ignorant man. After my defeat from my enemies, why does my mind become now compassionate towards those who stole away my kingdom? O best of the knowers of the *Vedas!* What am I to do now? Where to go? How can I make me happy? Please speak on these. O Muni! Now I am in want of your good grace.'

The Muni said: 'O Lord of the earth! Hear the extremely wonderful glories of the Devī that have no equal and that can fructify all desires. She, the

Mahā-Māyā, Who is all this world, is the Mother of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa. O King! Know verily that it is She and She alone, that can forcibly attract the hearts of all the *jīvas* and throw them in dire utter delusion. She is always the creatrix, preservrix and destructrix of the universe in the form of Hara. This Mahā-Māyā fulfills the desires of all the *jīvas* and She is known as the insurmountable Kālarātri. She is Kālī, the destructrix of all this universe and She is Kāmalā residing in the lotus. Know that this whole world rests on Her and it will become dissolved in Her. She is therefore, the highest and best. O King! Know, verily, that he alone can cross the delusion (*moha*) on whom the Grace of the Devī falls and otherwise no one can escape from this *anādi-moha*.'

Here ends the Tenth Chapter of the Tenth Skandha on the anecdote of the King Suratha in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XI—the Killing of Madhu Kaitabha

1-2. The king Suratha spoke: "O Best of the twice-born! Who is that Devī that you spoke just now? Why the Devī deludes all these beings? Why does She do so? Whence is the Devī born? What is Her Form? and what are Her qualities? O Brāhmaṇa! Kindly describe all these to me."

3-9. The Muni spoke: "O King! I will now describe the nature of the Devī Bhagavatī and why does She take Her Form in due time. Listen. In ancient days, when Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, the king of the *yogīs*, was lying in deep sleep on the ocean on the bed of Ananta after He had destroyed the Universe, there came out of the wax of his ear the two Dānavas, Madhu and Kaitabha, of monstrous appearances. They wanted to kill Brahmā, who was lying on the lotus coming out of the navel of Bhagavān. Seeing the two Daityas Madhu and Kaitabha, and seeing also Hari asleep, the Lotus-born Brahmā became very anxious and thought: "Now Bhagavān is asleep; and these two indomitable Daityas are ready to kill me. Now what am I to do? Where to go? How shall I get ease?" O child! Thus thinking, the high-

souled lotus-born suddenly came to a practical conclusion. He said: "Let me now take refuge to the Goddess of sleep, Nidrā, the Mother of all and under Whose power Bhagavān Hari is now asleep."

10-24. Brahmā then began to praise Her thus: "O Devī of the Devas! O upholdress of the world! Thou grantest desires of Thy devotees. O Thou auspicious! Thou art Para-brahman! By Thy command all are doing respectively their works in their proper spheres! Thou art the night of destruction (*kāla-rātri*); Thou art the great night (*mahā-rātri*). Thou art the greatly terrible night of delusion (*moha-rātri*); Thou art omnipresent; omniscient; of the nature of supreme bliss. Thou art regarded as the great. Thou art highly worshipped; Thou art alone in this world as highly intoxicated; Thou art submissive to *bhakti* only; Thou art the best of all the things; Thou art sung as the highest; Thou art modesty; Thou art *puṣṭi* (nourishment); Thou art forgiveness (*kṣamā*); Thou art Beauty (*kānti*); Thou art the embodiment of mercy; Thou art liked by all; Thou art adorned by the whole world; Thou art of the nature of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep; Thou art the highest; Thou art alone highest Deity; Thou art highly attached to the supreme bliss. There is no other thing than Thee. There is one only, and that is Thee. Hence Thou art denominated as one; Thou becomest again the two by contact with Thy *māyā*. Thou art the refuge of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma;* hence Thou art three; Thou art the *turīya* (the fourth state of consciousness) hence Thou art four. Thou art the God of the five elements; hence Thou art *panchamī* (five); Thou presidest over the six passions *kāma*, anger, etc.; hence Thou art Śāsthī; Thou presidest over the seven days of the week and Thou grantest boons seven by seven; hence Thou art Seven. Thou art the Goddess of the eight Vasus; hence Thou art Aṣṭamī; Thou art full of the nine *rāgas* and nine parts and Thou art the Goddess of nine planets; hence Thou art Navamī. Thou pervadest the ten quarters and Thou art worshipped by the ten quarters; hence Thou art named Daśamī (the tenth day of the fortnight); Thou art served by the eleven Rudras, the Goddesses of eleven *gaṇas* and Thou art fond of *ekādaśī-tithi;* hence Thou art denominated Ekādaśī; Thou art twelve-armed and the Mother of the twelve Ādityas, hence Thou art Dvādaśī; Thou art dear to the

thirteen *gaṇas*; Thou art the presiding Deity of Viśva Devas and Thou art the thirteen months including the *malas-māsa* (dirty month), hence Thou art Trayodaśī. Thou did grant boons to the fourteen Indras and Thou gavest birth to the fourteen Manus; hence Thou art Chaturdaśī. Thou art knowable by the *Pañchadaśī-mantra*. Thou art sixteen-armed and on Thy forehead the sixteen digits of the Moon are always shining; Thou art the sixteenth digit (ray) of the Moon named Amā; hence Thou art Sodaśī. O Deveśī! Thou, though attributeless and formless, appearest in these forms and attributes. Thou hast now enveloped in *moha* and darkness the Lord of Ramā, Bhagavān, the Deva of the Devas. These Daityas Madhu and Kaitabha are indomitable and very powerful. So to kill them, Thou better dost awake the Lord of the Devas."

25-34. The Muni said: 'Thus praised by the Lotus-born, the Tāmasi Bhagavatī (the Goddess of sleep and ignorance), the Beloved of Bhagavān, left Viṣṇu and enchanted the two Daityas.

On being awakened, the Supreme Spirit Viṣṇu, the Lord of the world, Bhagavān, the Deva of the Devas, saw the two Daityas. Those two monstrous Dānavas, beholding Madhusūdana, came up before Him, ready to fight. The hand-to-hand fight lasted amongst them for five thousand years. Then the two Dānavas, maddened by their great strength, were enchanted by the Māyā of Bhagavatī and told the Supreme Deity, "Ask a boon from us." Hearing this, Bhagavān *ādi-puruṣa*, (the first person) asked the boon that both of them would be killed that day by Him. Those two very powerful Dānavas spoke to Hari again, "Very well. Kill us on that part of the earth which is not under water." O King! Bhagavān Viṣṇu, the Holder of the conch and club, spoke: "All right. Indeed! Let that be so."

Saying this He placed their heads on His thigh and severed them with His disc (*chakra*). O King! Thus Mahā-Kālī, the Queen of all the *yogas* arose on this occasion when the praise was offered Her by Brahmā. O King! Now I will describe another account how this Mahā-Lakṣmī appeared on another occasion. Listen."

Here ends the Eleventh Chapter of the Tenth Skandha on the killing of Madhu Kaitabha in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XII—the Anecdote of Sāvarni Manu

1-6. The Muni said: "O King! The powerful Asura Mahisa, born of a she-buffalo, defeated all the Devas and became the Lord of the whole universe. That indomitable Dānava seized forcibly all the rights of the Devas and began to enjoy the pleasures of the kingdom over the three worlds. The Devas, thus defeated, were expelled from their abodes in the heavens. They took Brahmā as their leader and went to the excellent regions where Mahādeva and Viṣṇu resided, and informed Them of all that had been done by that vicious Asura Mahisa.

They said: 'O Deva of the Devas! The insolent Mahisāsura has become unbearable, and he has taken possessions of the rights and properties of the whole host of the Devas and he is now enjoying them. Both of you are quite capable to destroy the Asura. So why do you not devise means to annihilate him in no time?'

7-10. Hearing these pitiful words of the Devas, Bhagavān Viṣṇu became quite indignant. Śaṅkara, Brahmā and the other Devas all were inflamed with anger. O King! From the face of the angry Hari, then emanated an unusual fire, brilliant like thousand Suns. Then by and by emanated fires also from the bodies of all the Devas who were filled then with joy. From the mass of fire thus emanated there came out a beautiful female figure. The face of this figure was formed out of the fire that emanated from the body of Mahādeva. Her hairs were formed out of the fire of Yama and Her arms were formed out of the fire that emanated from Viṣṇu.

11-21. O King! From the fire of the Moon came out two breasts; from the fire of Indra came out Her middle portion; from the fire of Varuṇa appeared Her loins and thighs; from the fire of Earth, Her hips were formed; from the fire of Brahmā, Her feet were formed; from the fire of the Sun, Her toes

were formed; from the fire of the Vasus, Her fingers were formed; from Kuvera's fire, Her nose came out; from the excellent tejas of Prajāpati, teeth; from the fire of Agṇi, Her three eyes; from the fire of the twilights, Her eyebrows and from the fire of Vāyu, Her ears appeared.

O Lord of men! Thus Bhagavatī Mahisamardinī was born of the *tejas* (fiery substances) of the Devas. Next Śiva gave Her the *śūla* (weapon spear); Viṣṇu gave a Sudarśana (Chakra); Varuṇa gave the conchshell; Fire gave a Śakti (weapon); Vāyu gave Her bows and arrows; Indra gave Her the thunderbolt and the bell of the elephant Airāvata; Yama gave Her the destruction staff (*kāla-danda*); Brāmā gave Her a Rudrākṣa mālā and *kāmaṇḍalū;* the Sun gave Her, in every pore his wonderful rays; time (Kāla) gave Her a sharp axe and shield; the oceans gave Her a beautiful necklace and new clothes (two in number); Viśvakarmā gladly gave Her a crown, earrings, *kataka*, *aṅgada*, *chandrārdha*, tinklets; and the Himālayas gave Her a Lion as Her vehicle, and various gems and jewels.

22-30. Kuvera, the Lord of wealth gave Her a cup filled with drink; Bhagavān Ananta Deva gave Her a necklace of snakes (*nāghāra*). Thus the World Mother, the Devī, became honored by all the Devas. The Devas, very much oppressed by Mahisāsura, then, chanted various hymns of praise to the World Mother Māheśvarī Mahā-Devī.

Hearing their *stotras*, the Deveśī, worshipped by the Devas, shouted aloud a War-Cry. O King! Mahisāsura, startled at that War-Cry, came to Bhagavatī with all his army corps. Then that great Asura Mahisa hurled various weapons in the air and overcast the sky with them, and began to fight with great skill. The several generals Chiksura, Durdhara, Durmukha, Vāskala, Tāmraka, Vidālāksa and various other innumerable generals fought as if death incarnate, accompanied Mahisa, the chief Dānava. A fierce fight then ensued. Then the Devī Who enchants all the beings became red-eyed with anger and began to kill the generals of the enemy party. When the generals were killed one by one Mahisāsura, skilled in the science of magic, came up quickly to the front of the Devī.

31-40. The Lord of the Dānavas, then, by his magic power, began to assume various forms. Bhagavatī, too, began to destroy his those forms. Then the Daitya, the crusher of the Devas, assumed the form of a buffalo and began to fight. The Devī then fastened the animal, the Asura, the death of the Devas, tightly and cut off his head by Her axe. The remainder of his forces then fled away in terror and disorder with a loud cry. The Devas became very glad and began to chant hymns to the Devī. O King! Thus the Lakṣmī Devī appeared to kill Mahisāsura.

Now I will describe how Sarasvatī appeared. Listen. Once on a time the two very powerful Daityas, Śumbha and Niśumbha were born. They attacked the Devas, oppressed them and seized their houses and rights. The Devas became dispossessed of their kingdoms, went to the Himālayas and offered *stotras* to the Devī with the greatest devotion: 'O Deveśī! O Thou, skilled in removing the difficulties of the *bhaktas!* Victory to Thee! O Thou, the sinless One! Old age and death cannot touch Thee. O Thou! Death incarnate to the Dānavas! O Deveśī! O Thou, of mighty valor and prowess! O Thou, the embodiment of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa! Unbounded is Thy might; Thou canst be easily reached by the power of devotion. O Thou, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer! O Mādhavī! O Thou, the Giver of Bliss! Thou dancest with great joy at the time of the dissolution of all things (*pralaya*).

41-50. O Thou, full of mercy! O Deva-Deveśī! Be gracious unto us. O Thou, the Remover of the sufferings of the refugees! We now come unto Thy protection. The terror of Śumbha and Niśumbha is like an endless ocean unto us. Save, save us from their fast clutches. O Devī! save us O Queen! verily.'

When the Devas praised thus, the daughter of the Himālayas, Bhagavatī became pleased and asked 'What is the matter?' In the meanwhile, there emitted from the physical sheath of the Devī another Devī, Kauśikī who gladly spoke to the Devas: 'O Suras! I am pleased with Thy *stotra*. Now ask the boon that you desire.'

The Devas then asked for the following boon: 'O Devī! The two famous Daityas, Śumbha and Niśumbha have attacked forcibly the three worlds. The wicked Lord of the Dānavas, Śumbha, has overcome us by the power of his arms and is now tormenting us without any break. Kindly devise some means to kill him.'

The Devī said: 'O Devas! Be patient. I will kill these two Daityas, Śumbha and Niśumbha and thus remove the thorn on your way. At an early date I will do good to you.' Thus saying to Indra and the other Devas, the merciful Devī disappeared at once before their eyes. The Deva with their hearts delighted went to the beautiful Sumeru Mountain and dwelt there in the caves thereof. Here the servants of Śumbha and Niśumbha, Chhanda and Munda, while they were making their circuits, saw the exquisitely beautiful Devī, the enchantress of the world, and came back to Śumbha their King and said:

51-60. 'O Destroyer of enemies! O giver of honor! O great King! You are the Lord of all the Daityas and are fit to enjoy all the gems and jewels. Today we have seen an extraordinary beautiful woman jewel. She is fit to be enjoyed by you. So now you would better bring that perfectly beautiful woman and enjoy. No such enchanting women can be seen amongst the Asura women Nāga Kanyās, Gandharbha women, Dānavīs or men.' Hearing thus the words of the servant, Śumbha, the tormentor of the foes, sent a Daitya named Sugrīva as a messenger to Her. The messenger went to the Devī as early as possible and spoke to Her all that Śumbha had told him. 'O Devī! The Asura Śumbha is now the conqueror of the three worlds and respected by the Devas. O Devī! He is now enjoying all that is best, the gems and jewels; O Devī! I am his messenger sent here to convey to you his message as follows:

"O Devī! I am the sole enjoyer of all the jewels. O beautiful-eyed! You are a gem; so you would worship me. O fair One! All the gems and jewels that are in the Deva-loka, in the Daitya-loka, or amongst the regions of men, are under my control. So You would lovingly worship me."

The Devī said: “O Messenger! True that you are speaking for your King; but I made a promise before, how can I act against it? O messenger! Hear what I promised.

61-70. Whoever in the three worlds will conquer Me by sheer force and thus crush My vanity, whoever will be as strong as Myself, He can enjoy Me. So the King of Daityas can prove My promise true and by sheer force can marry Me. What is there with him that he cannot do? So, messenger! Go back to your master and tell him all this so that the powerful Śumbha may fulfil My promise.’

Hearing thus the words of the great Devī, the messenger went back to śumbba and informed him everything regarding the Devī’s sayings. The very powerful Lord of the Daityas, Śumbha became very angry at the unpleasant words of the messenger and commanded the Daitya named Dhumrāksa: ‘O Dhumrāksa! Listen to my words with great attention. Go and catch hold of that wicked woman by her hairs and bring her to me. Go quickly; do not delay.’ Thus commanded, the very powerful and the best of the Daityas, Dhumrāksa, went at once to the Devī with sixty thousand Daityas and cried aloud to Her:

‘O auspicious One! You would better worship quickly our Lord Śumbha, who is very powerful and mighty; you will then acquire all sorts of pleasures; else I will hold you by your hairs and take you to the Lord of the Daityas.’

71-80. Thus addressd by Dhumrāksa Daitya, the enemy of the Devas, the Devī said: ‘O powerful one! O Daitya! What you have spoken is perfectly right, but tell me first what you or your king Śumbha can do to Me?’

When the Devī said thus, the Daitya Dhūmralochana rushed on Her at once with arms and weapons. With one loud noise, Māheśvarī burnt him immediately to ashes. O King! The other forces were partly crushed by the Lion, the vehicle of the Devī and partly fled away in disorder to all the quarters; some became senseless out of fear. Śumbha , the Lord of the

Daityas, became very angry to hear this. His face assumed a terrible form with eyebrows contracted. Then he became impatient with anger and sent in order Chhanda, Munda and Raktabīja.

The three powerful Daityas went to the battle and tried their might to capture the Devī. The Devī Jagaddhātrī, of violent prowess, seeing that these three Daityas were coming to Her, killed them by Her trident and laid them prostrate on the ground. Hearing their death with all their army, Śumbha and Niśumbha came in their own persons arrogantly to the battlefield. Śumbha and Niśumbha fought for a time with the Devī a terrible fight and became tired, when the Devī killed them outright. When the Bhagavatī, Who is all this world, killed Śumbha and Niśumbha, the Devas began to praise Bhagavatī, the supreme Deity of *vāk* (word) incarnate.

81-93. O King! Thus I have spoken to you in due order the manner in which the beautiful Kālī, Mahā-Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī incarnated themselves on the earth. That Supreme Deity, the Devī Parameśvarī thus creates, preserves, and destroys the universe. You better take refuge of that highly adored Devī who causes the distinction and the delusion of this Universe. Then only you will attain success."

Nārāyaṇa said: "The king Suratha, hearing these beautiful words of the Muni, took refuge of the Devī, which yields all desired objects. He built an earthen image of the Devī and with concentrated attention, thought wholly of the Devī and began to worship Her with devotion. When the worship was over, he offered sacrifices of the blood of his body to the Devī. Then the World Mother, the Deity of the Devas, became pleased and appeared before him and told him: 'Accept the boon that you desire.' When the Devī said thus, the king asked from the Maheśvarī that excellent knowledge whereby the ignorance is destroyed and as well the kingdom free from any dangers or difficulties.

The Devī said: 'O King! By My boon, you will get your foeless kingdom in this very birth as well as the *jñāṇam* that removes ignorance. O King! I will

tell you also what you will be in the next birth. Hear. In your next birth, you will be the son of the Sun and be famous as Sāvarni Manu. By My boon you will be the Lord of the *manvantara*, become very powerful and you will get good many sons.' Thus granting him this boon, the Devī disappeared. By the Grace of the Devī, Suratha became the Lord of the *manvantara*. O *sādhu!* Thus I have described to you the birth and deeds of Sāvarni. He who hears or reads this anecdote with devotion, will be a favorite of the Devī."

Here ends the Twelfth Chapter of the Tenth Skandha on the anecdote of Sāvarni Manu in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIII—the Account of Bhrāmarī Devī

1-21. Śrī Nārāyaṇa spoke: "O child Nārada! Hear now the wonderful anecdotes of the births of the remaining other Manus. The mere remembrance of these birth anecdotes causes *bhakti* to grow and well up towards the Devī. Vaivasvata Manu had six sons: Karusa, Pṛsadhra, Nābhāga, Diṣṭa, Saryāti, and Triśaṅku. All of them were stout and strong. Once they all united went to the excellent banks of the Yamuṇā and began to practice *prānāyama* without taking any food, and engaged in worshipping the Devī. Each of them built separately an earthen image of the Devī, and worshipped Her with devotion and with various offerings. In the beginning, they took the dry leaves of the trees that dropped of themselves for their food; then they drank water only, then breathed air only; then the smoke from the fire of the *homa;* then they depended on the solar rays. Thus they practiced *tapasyā* with great difficulties. The continual worship of the Devī with the greatest devotion made them conscious of their clear intellect, destructive of all sorts of vanities and delusions, and Manu's sons thought only of the hallowed feet of the Devī; their intellects were purified, and they were amazed to see within their Self the whole universe.

Thus they practiced their *tapasyā* full twelve years when Bhagavatī, the ruling principle of this universe, resplendent wiih the brilliance of the thousand Suns, appeared before them. The princes with their intelligences thus purified saw Her, bowed down and, with lowly hearts, began to chant hymns to Her with greatest devotion. "O Īśānī! O merciful! Thou art the Devī presiding over all. Thou art the best. So victory to Thee! Thou art known by the *vāgbhava-mantra*. Thou gettest pleased when the *vāgbhava-mantra* is repeated. O Devī! Thou art of the nature and form of *klīṁ*. Thou gettest pleased with the repetition of *klīṁ mantra*. O Thou, that gladdenest the Lord! Thou bestowest joy and pleasure in the heart of the King of Kāma. O Mahā-Māyā! When Thou art pleased, Thou givest that unequalled kingdom. O Thou that increasest the enjoyments! Thou art Viṣṇu, Sūrya, Hara, Indra and the other Devas."

When the high-souled princes praised Her thus, Bhagavatī became pleased and spoke to them the following sweet words: "O high-souled princes! You all have worshipped Me and practiced, indeed, very hard *tapasyā,* and thus you have become sinless; your intellects and hearts have become thoroughly purged and thus purified. Now ask boons that you desire. I will grant them ere long to you."

The princes said: "O Devī! We want unrivalled kingdoms, many sons of long longevity, continual enjoyment of pleasures, fame, energy, freedom in all actions, and as well the good and keen intelligence. These will be beneficial to us."

The Devī said: "Whatever you have desired, I grant them to you all. Besides, I give you another boon. Listen attentively. By My Grace you all will be the Lords of the *manvantaras* and acquire strength that will experience no defeat, and you will get prosperity, fame, energy, powers, a continual line of descendants and abundant full enjoyments."

22-32. Nārāyaṇa said: "After the World Mother Bhrāmarī Devī granted them these boons, the princes chanted hymns to Her, then She instantly vanished. The very energetic princes acquired in that birth excellent

kingdoms and abundance of wealth. They all had sons and thus established their families, and became the Lords of *manvantara* in their next births. By the Grace of the Devī, the first of the princes Karusa became the Ninth Manu, the exceedingly powerful Dakṣa Sāvarni; the second prince Pṛsadhra became the Tenth Manu, named Meru Sāvarni; the third prince, the highly enthusiastic Nābhāga became the Eleventh Manu, named Sūrya Sāvarni; the fourth prince Diṣṭa became the Twelfth Manu, named Chandra Sāvarni; the powerful fifth prince Śaryāti became the Thirteenth Manu named Rudra Sāvarni and the sixth prince Triśaṅku became the Fourteenth Manu named Viṣṇu Sāvarni, and became the celebrated Lord of the world."

33-41. Nārada questioned: "O Wise One! Who is that Bhrāmari Devī? What is Her Nature? What for She takes birth? Kindly describe all these beautiful and pain-destroying anecdotes to me. I am not satiated with the drinking of the nectar of the glories of the Devī; my desire to hear more is as strong as ever. As the drink of the nectar takes away death, so the drink of this anecdote of the Devī takes away the fear of death."

Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! I will now narrate the wonderful glories of that unthinkable, unmaṇifested World Mother, leading to *mukti*. Hear, as a Mother behaves towards Her child kindly and without any hypocrisy, so the World Mother in all Her lives maṇifests Her merciful sincere dealings for the welfare of the humaṇity. In days gone by, in the nether regions, in the city of the Daityas, there lived a powerful Daitya named Aruna. He was a furious Deva hater and a *pākkā* hyprocrite. With a view to conquer the Devas, he went to the banks of the Ganges in the Himālayas, practiced a very hard *tapasyā* to Brahmā, taking Him to be the protector of the Daityas. First influenced by *tamo-guṇa*, he withheld in his body the five *vāyus*, partook only dry leaves, repeated the Gāyatrī *mantra* and practiced austerities. Thus he practiced for full ten thousand years. Then for another ten thousand years the Daitya lived drinking some drops of water only; then for another ten thousand years he remained by inhaling air only; and then for another ten thousand years he did not take anything and thus practiced he his wonderful *tapasyā*.

42-49. Thus practicing his *tapasyā,* a sort of wonderful halo of light emitted from his body and began to burn the whole world. This then appeared a great wonder. All the Devas then exclaimed. "Oh! What is this! Oh! What is this!" And they trembled. All were very much terrified and took refuge of Brahmā. Hearing all the news from the Devas, the four-faced Bhagavān rode on His vehicle the swan, and with the Gāyatrī went very gladly to where the Daitya was practicing his austerities. He saw that the Daitya was immersed in meditation with his eyes closed; and he looked, as it were, blazing with fire, as if a second Agni himself. His belly had become dried up, body withered and the nerves of the bodies, too, became almost visible; only the life breath was lingering there.

Brahmā then spoke to him: "O child! Auspices to you! Now ask the boon that you desire." Hearing these gladdening nectar-like words from the mouth of Brahmā, Aruna, chief of the Daityas opened his eyes and saw Brahmā in his front. Seeing Brahmā before him with a mālā of beads and *kāmandalu* in his hand, attended by Gāyatrī and the four *Vedas,* muttering the name of the eternal Brahman, the Daitya rose up and bowed down to Him and sang to Him various *stotras*.

50-59. Then the intelligent Daitya asked from Brahmā the following boon that "I shall not die. Grant this." Brahmā then gently explained to him: "O best of the Dānavas! See that Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara and others are not free from this limitation of death! What to speak then for others! I cannot grant you a boon that is an impossibility. Ask what is possible and just. The intelligent persons never show an eagerness to an impossibility."

Hearing the above words of Brahmā, Aruna again said with devotion: "O Deva! If Thou art unwilling to grant me the above boon, then O Lord! grant me such a boon, as is practicable, that my death shall not be caused by any war, nor by any arms or weapons, nor by any man or any woman, by any biped or quadruped or any combination of two and grant me such a boon, such a large army as I can conquer the Devas."

Hearing the words of the Daitya, Brahmā said "Let that be so" and went back instantly to His own abode. Then, puffed up with that boon, the Daitya Aruna called on all the other Daityas that lived in the nether regions. The Daityas that were under his shelter, came and saluted him as their king and, by his command, they sent messengers to the heavens to fight with the Devas. Hearing from the messenger that the Daityas were willing to fight with the Devas, Indra trembled with fear and went instantly with the Devas to the abode of Brahmā. Taking Brahmā, too, along with them from there, they went to the Viṣṇu-loka and took Viṣṇu with them and all went to the Śiva-loka.

60-70. There they all held a conference how to kill the Daitya, the enemy of the Gods. While on the other hand, Aruna, the king of the Daityas surrounded by his army, went ere long to the heavens.

O Muni! The Daitya, then, through the power of his *tapas*, assumed various forms and seized the rights and possessions of the Moon, the Sun, Yama, Agṇi and all the othars. All the Devas, then, dislodged from their stations went to the region of Kailaśa and represented to Śaṅkara about their own troubles and dangers respectively. Then, great discussions cropped up about what was to be done. Then Brahmā said that the death of the Daitya would not ensue from any fight, with any arms or weapons, from any man or woman, biped, quadruped or from any combination of the above two. Then the Devas became all anxious and could not find out any solution at that instant, when the incorporeal voice was clearly heard in the heavens: "Let you all worship the Queen of the universe. She will carry out your work to success. If the king of the Daityas, always engaged in muttering the Gāyatrī, forsakes the Gāyatrī somehow, then his death will occur."

Hearing this gladdening celestial voice, the Devas held council with great caution. When it was settled what ought to be done, Indra asked Bṛhaspati and said: "O Gurudeva! You would better go to the Daitya for carrying out of the Devas' ends, and do so that he forsakes the Devī Gāyatrī Parameśvarī. We will all now go and meditate on Her. When She will be pleased, She will help us.

71-77. Thus commanding Bṛhaspati and thinking that the beautiful protectress of Jāmbū Nada would protect them, the Devas all started to worship Her, and going there, began the Devī *yajña* and with great devotion muttered the *māyā-bīja* (***hrīṁ***) and practiced asceticism. On the other hand, Bṛhaspati went ere long in the garb of a Muni to the Daitya Aruna. The king of the Daityas then asked him: "O best of Munis! Whence and why have you come here. Say, O Muni! Where have you come? I am not one of your party. Rather I am your enemy." Hearing the above words, Bṛhaspati said: When you are worshipping incessantly the Devī whom we too worship, then say how you are not on our side!"

O saint! The vicious Daitya, hearing the above words and deluded by the *māyā* of the Devas, forsook the Gāyatrī *mantra* out of vanity and therefore he became weak, bereft of the Holy Fire.

78-85. Then Bṛhaspati, having succeeded in his work there, went to the heavens, saw Indra and told him everything in detail. The Devas became satisfied and worshipped the highest Deity. O Muni! Thus a long interval passed, when one day the World Mother, the auspicious Devī appeared before them. She was resplendent with the brilliance of ten million suns and looked beautiful like ten millions of Kandarpas (Gods of love). Her body was anointed with variegated colors; She wore a pair of cloths; a wonderful garland suspended from Her neck; Her body was decked with various ornaments and in the fists of Her hands there were wonderful rows of hornets (large black bees). Her one hand was ready to grant boons and Her other hand was ready to signal 'no fear.' On the neck of peaceful Bhagavatī, the ocean of mercy, were seen variegated garlands with large black bees all round. Those male and female bees singing incessantly all round Her the *hṛīṁ-kāra mantra* (the first vibration of force), *kotis* of black bees surrounded Her. The all-auspicious Bhagavatī, praised by all the *Vedas*, Who is all in all, composed of all, Who is all good, the Mother of all, omniscient, the protectress of all, was adorned fully with dress.

86-96. Seeing suddenly the Devī in front of them, Brahmā and the other Devas became surprised, and by and by they got relieved and gladly began

to chant hymns of praise to Bhagavatī, Whose glories have been written in the *Vedas*.

The Devas said: "O Devī! Obeisance to Thee! Thou art the highest knowledge and the creatrix, preservrix and the destructrix of the universe. O Thou, the lotus-eyed! Thou art the refuge of all! So we bow down to Thee. O Devī! Thou art collectively and individually Viśva, Taijasa, Prājña, Virāt and Sūtrātmā. O Bhagavatī, Thou art differentiated and undifferentiated; Thou art the *kūtastha-chaitanya*—the unmoveable, unchangeable consciousness. So we bow down to Thee. O Durge! Thou art unconcerned with the creation, preservation and destruction; yet Thou punishest the wicked and art easily available by the sincere devotion of Thy *bhaktas*. O Devī! Thou scorchest and destroyest the ignorance and sin of the embodied souls. Hence Thou art named Bhargā. So we bow down to Thee. O Mother! Thou art Kālikā, Nīla Sarasvatī, Ugra Tārā, Mahogrā; Thou assumest many other forms. So we always bow down to Thee. O Devī! Thou art Tripurasundarī, Bhairabī, Mātangī, Dhūmāvatī, Chhinnamastā, Śākambharī and Rakta Dantikā. Obeisance to Thee! O Bhagavatī! It is Thou that didst appear as Lakṣmī out of the milk ocean (*ksīra-samudra*). Thou hadst destroyed Vṛtrāsura, Chhanda, Munda, Dhūmralochana, Rakta Bīja, Śumbha, Niśumbha and exterminated the Dānavas and thus, Thou didst do great favors to the Devas. So, O gracious-countenanced! Thou art Vījayā and Gaṅgā; O Sārade! We bow down to Thee. O Devī! Thou art the earth, fire, *prāṇa* and other *vāyus* and substances. O merciful! Thou art of the form of this universe; the Deva form, and the Moon, Sun, other luminous forms and the knowledge form.

97-109. O Devī! Thou art Sāvitrī; Thou art Gāyatrī; Thou art Sarasvatī; Thou art Svadhā, Svāhā and Dakśiṇā. So we bow down to Thee. Thou art, in the *Vedas* and *āgamas*, 'Not this, not this.' Thou art what is left after the negation of all this. This all the *Vedas* declare of Thy true nature thus as the Absolute consciousness in all. Thus Thou art the highest Deity. So we worship Thee. As Thou art surrounded by large black bees, Thou art named Bhrāmarī. We always make obeisance to Thee! Obeisance to Thee!

Obeisance to Thy sides! Obeisance to Thy back! Obeisance to Thy front! O Mother! Obeisance to Thy above! Obeisance to Thy below! Obeisance to everywhere round of Thee! O Thou, the dweller in Manī Dvīpa! O Mahā Devī! Thou art the guide of the innumerable *brahmāṇḍas!* O World Mother! Let Thou be merciful to us. O Devī! Thou art higher than the highest. O World Mother! Victory be to Thee! All hail! O Goddess of the universe! Thou art the best in the whole universe; victory to Thee! O Lady of the world! Thou art the mine of all the gems of qualities. O Parameśvarī! O World Mother! Let Thou be pleased unto us."

Nārāyaṇa said: "Hearing those sweet, ready and confident words of the Devas, the World Mother said in the sweet tone of a mad cuckoo: 'O Devas! As far as granting boons to others is concerned, I am ever-ready. I am always pleased with you. So, O Devas! Say what you want.' Hearing the words of the Devī, the Devas began to express the cause of their sorrows. They informed Her of the wicked nature of the vicious Daitya, the neglect of the Devas, the Brāhmaṇas and the *Vedas* and the ruins thereof, and the dispossession of the Devas of their abodes and the receiving by the Daitya of the boon from Brahmā; in fact, everything what they had to say, duly and vigorously. Then the Bhagavatī Bhrāmarī Devī sent out all sorts of black bees, hornets, etc., from Her sides, front and forepart.

110-120. Innumerable lines of black bees then were generated and they joined themselves with those that got out of the Devī's hands and thus they covered the whole earth. Thus countless bees began to emit from all sides like locusts. The sky was overcast with the bees; and the earth was covered with darkness. The sky, mountain peaks, trees, forests all became filled with bees and the spectacle presented a grand dismal sight. Then the black bees began to tear asunder the breasts of the Daityas as the bees bite those who destroy their beehives. Thus the Daityas could not use their weapons nor could they fight nor exchange any words. Nothing they could do; they had no help but to die. The Daityas remained in the same state where they were and in that state they wondered and died. No one could talk with another. Thus the principal Daityas died within an instant. Thus

completing their destruction, the bees came back to the Devī. All the people then spoke to one another "Oh! What a wonder! Oh! What a wonder!" Or like this: "Whose *māyā* is this! What a wonder that She will do like this!" Thus Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa became merged in the ocean of joy, and worshipped the Devī Bhagavatī with various offerings, shouts of "Victory to the Devī!" and showered flowers all around. The Munis began to recite the *Vedas*. The Gandharvas began to sing.

121-127. The various musical instruments, Mṛdaṅgas, Murajas, the Indian *vīnās*, Dhakkās, Damarus, *śankhas*, bells, etc., all sounded, and the three worlds were filled with their echoes. All with folded palms chanted various hymns of praise to the Devī and said "O Mother! Īsānī! Victory to Thee!" The Mahā-Devī became glad and gave to each separate boons and when they asked for 'unshakeable devotion to Thy lotus feet,' She granted them that also, and disappeared before them.

Thus I have described to you the glorious character of the Bhrāmārī Devī. If anybody hears this very wonderful anecdote, he crosses at once this ocean of the world. Along with the glories and greatness of the Devī, if one hears the accounts of Manus, then all auspiciousness comes to him. He who hears or recites daily this greatness of the Devī, becomes freed from all his sins and he gets himself absorbed in the thoughts of the Devī (*sājuya-mukti*)."

Note: The *mantra* ***hṛīṁ*** is here not merely the seed, the spiritual password, but it connotes, besides the idea of the password, the *ādi-śabda*, the first vibration, and it exhibits the first spiritual form, endowed with the highest feelings of faith, wisdom, bliss and joy, displayed with the grandest colors, startling thrills, rapt enchanting signs, gestures and postures, shooting forth all powers, the sources of *siddhis* that cannot be ordinarily conceived in the worldly concerns. Their faint echoes govern this mighty world. The *mantras* are seated in the six *chakras*, plexuses or *laya* centers in the spinal cord. Within these *chakras*, the transformations of the *tattvas* take place. Some vanish. Some appear and so on. Also, in this chapter we find clearly the mention of the several names of the *daśa-mahā-vidyās*.

Here ends the Thirteenth Chapter of the Tenth Skandha of the account of Bhrāmarī Devī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa and here ends as well the Tenth Skandha.

Eleventh Skandha

Chapter I—What is to be Thought of in the Morning

1-13. Nārada said: "O Bhagavān! O Thou, the eternal one! O Nārāyaṇa! O Lord of the past and the future! Thou art the creator and the Lord of all the beings that lived in the past and that will come into existence in the future. Thou hast described to me the highly wonderful and excellent anecdote of the exalted Devī: how She assumed the forms of Mahākālī, Mahā-Lakṣmī, Mahā-Sarasvatī and Bhrāmarī for the fulfilment of the Devas' purposes, and how the Devas got back their possessions by the Grace of the Devī. All you have described. O Lord! Now I want to hear the rules of *sadāchāra* (right way of living), the due observance of which by the devotees pleases the World Mother. Kindly describe them."

Nārāyaṇa said: "O knower of truth! Now I am telling you those rules of the right way of living, which rightly observed, always please Bhagavatī. Listen first, I will talk of the Brāhmaṇas, how their welfare is secured, what the Brāhmaṇas ought to do on getting up early in the morning from their bed. From the sunrise to the sunset the Brāhmaṇas should do all the daily and occasional duties (*nitya* and *naimittika-karmas*) and they are to perform the optional works for some particular object such as Puttresti Yajña and other good works (not acts of black magic as killing, causing pain and inconveniences to others, etc.). It is the Self alone and not the father, mother, etc., nor any other that helps us on our way to that happiness in the next world. Father, mother, wife, sons and others are helps merely to our happiness in this world. None of them are helpful to us in bettering our state in the next world.

Deliverance of one's Self depends verily on his own Self. Therefore one should always earn and store *dharma* (religion) and observe always the right conduct to help one in the next world. If *dharma* be on our side, this endless sea of troubles can be safely crossed. The rules of right living as

ordained by Manu in *śrutis* and *Manu-smṛtis* are the principal *dharmas*. The Brāhmaṇas should always be observant to their *dharma* as ordained in the *śāstras*, *śruti* and *Smṛti*. Follow the right conduct and then you will get life, posterity and increase of happiness easily here and hereafter. By right conduct, food is obtained and sins are easily destroyed; right conduct is the auspicious principal *dharma* of men. Persons of right living enjoy happiness in this world as well as in the next. Even those who are veiled in darkness by ignorance and thus wildly enchanted, can verily see their way to *mukti* if they follow the great light revealed to them by *dharma* and right conduct. It is by *sadāchāra*, the eternal way of life, that superiority is attained. Men of right conduct always do good deeds. From good deeds, knowledge comes. This is the advice of Manu.

14-24. Right way of living is the best of all the *dharmas* and is great *tapasyā* (asceticism). Spiritual knowledge comes from this right living. Everything is attained thereby. He who is devoid of *sadāchāra* is like a Śūdra, even if he comes of a Brāhmaṇa family. There is no distinction whatsoever betwen him and a Śūdra. Right conduct is of two kinds: (1) as dictated by the *śāstras*, (2) as dictated by the popular custom (*laukika*). Both these methods should be observed by him who wants welfare for his Self. He is not to forsake one of them. O Muni! The village *dharma*, the *dharma* of one's own caste, the *dharma* of one's own family and the *dharma* of one's own country all should be observed by men. Never, never he is to do anything otherwise. That is to be preserved with great loving devotion.

Men who practice wrong ways of living are censured by the public; they always suffer from diseases. Avoid wealth and desires that have no *dharma* in them. Why? If in the name of *dharma*, painful acts (e. g. killing animals in sacrifices) are committed, those are blamed by the people; so never commit them. Avoid them by all means."

Nārada said: "O Muni! The *śāstras* are not one; they are many, and they lay down different rules and contradictory opinions, How then *dharma* is to be followed? And according to what *dharma-śāstra?"*

Nārāyaṇa said: "*Śruti* and *Smṛti* are the two eyes of God; the *Purāṇam* is His heart. Whatever is stated in *Śruti*, the *Smṛti* and the *Purāṇams* is *dharma;* whatever else is written in other *śāstras* is not *dharma*. Where you will find differences between *Śruti*, *Smṛti* and *Purāṇas*, accept the words of the *Śruti* as final proofs. Wherever *Smṛti* disagrees with the *Purāṇas,* know the *Smṛtis* to be more authoritative.

And where differences will crop up in the *Śrutis* themselves, know that *dharma*, too, is of two kinds. And where the differences will crop up in the *Smṛtis* themselves, consider that different things are aimed at. In some *Purāṇas*, the *dharma* of the *Tantras* is duly described; but those which go against the *Vedas* are not to be accepted any means.

25-37. *Tantra* is accepted as authoritative proof then and then only when it does not contradict the *Vedas*. Whatever goes clearly against the *Vedas* can in no way be accepted as a proof. In matters concerning *dharma*, the *Vedas* are the sole proof. Therefore that which is not against the *Vedas* can be taken as proof; otherwise not. Whoever acts *dharma* according to other proofs than what is ordained in the *Vedas*, goes to the hell in the abode of Yama to get his lesson. So the *dharma* that is by all means to be accepted as such, is what is stated in the Vedas. The *Smṛtis, Purāṇas* or the *Tantra-śāstras* can be taken also as authoritative when they are not conflicting to *Vedas*. Any other *śāstras* can be taken as authoritative when it is fundamentally coincident with the *Vedas*. Else it can never be accepted.

Those who do injury to others even by the blade of a *kuśa* grass used as a weapon, go to hell with their heads downwards and their feet upwards. Those that follow their own sweet free will, that take up any sort of dress (e. g. Bauddhas), those that follow the philosophical doctrines called Pāśupatas, and the other hermits and saints and persons that take up other vows contrary to the religions of the *Vedas*, for example, the Vaikhānasa followers, those who brand their bodies by the hot *mudrās* at the places of pilgrimages, e. g. Dvārkā, etc., they go to hell with their bodies scorched by red hot brands (Tapta-Mudrās).

So persons should act according to the excellent religions commanded by the *Vedas*. Every day he should get up from his bed early in the morning and think thus: "What good acts have I done, what have I given as charities? Or what I advised others to do charities what greater sins (*mahā-pātakas*) and what smaller sins have I committed?" At the last quarter of the night he should think of Para-brahman. He should place his right leg on his left thigh and his left on his right thigh crosswise keeping his head straight up and touching the breast with his chin, and closing his eyes, he should sit steadily so that the upper teeth should not touch the lower jaw.

He should join his tongue with his palate and he should sit quiet, restraining his senses. He should be *śuddha-sattva*. His seat should not be very low. First of all he should practice *prāṇāyāma* twice or thrice; and within his heart he should meditate the Self of the shape of the holy flame or the holy light. (*Āūm̐ maṇi padme hum*)

38-49. He should fix his heart for a certain time to that luminous self whose eyes are everywhere. So the intelligent man should practice *dhārana*. *Prāṇāyāma* is of six kinds: (1) *sadhūma* (when the breaths are not steady), (2) *nirdhūma* (better than *sadhūma*), (3) *sagarbha* (when united with one's *mantra*), (4) *agarbha* (when the practice is without the thought of any *mantra*), (5) *salakṣya* (when the heart is fixed on one's Deity) and (6) *alakṣya* (when the heart is not fixed on one's Deity). No *yoga* can be compared with *prāṇāyāma*. This is equal to itself. Nothing can be its equal.

This *prāṇāyāma* is of three kinds, called *rechaka, pūraka* and *kumbhaka*. The *prāṇāyāma* consists of three letters, *A-U-M* of the nature of *Āūm̐*. Or in other words the letter *A* of the *praṇava* Āūm̐ indicates *pūraka*, the letter *U* denotes *kumbhaka* and the letter *M* denotes *rechaka*. By the *īdā-nādi* (left nostril) inhale as long as you count *A* (Viṣṇu) thirty-two times; then withold breath, i.e., do *kumbhaka* as long as you count *U* (Śiva) sixty-four times and by the *piṅgalā-nādi* (right nostril) do the *rechaka*, i.e., exhale the breath as long as you count *M* (Brahmā) for sixteen times.

O Muni! Thus I have spoken to you of the *sadhūma-prāṇāyāma*. After doing the *prāṇāyāma* as stated above, pierce the six *chakras* called *sathakra-bheda* and carry the *kula-kuṇḍalinī* to the *brahma-randhra*, the brain aperture, or to the thousand-petalled lotus in the head, and meditate in the heart on the Self like a steady flame."

Note: The *nādis* mentioned here are not those which are known to the Vaidya or the Medical *śāstras*. The latter are the gross physical nerves, The *nādis* here are the *yoga-nādis*, the subtle channels (*vivaras*) along which the *prānik* currents flow. Now the process of piercing the six *chakras* (nerve centers or centers of moving *prānik* forces) is being described. Within this body, the six nerve centers called *padmas* (lotuses) exist. They are respectively situated at the (1) *Mūlādhāra* (halfway between Anus and *Liṅga-mūla*), called the Sacral Plexus; (2) *Liṅga-mūla* (the root of the genital organs); called postatic plexus; (also called *Svādhisthāna*) (3) Navel, the solar plexus (4) Heart, the cardiac plexus, (5) Throat (6) Forehead, between the eyebrows; the lotus in the forehead, called the cavernous plexus (*ājnā-chakra*) has two petals.

In these two petals, the two letters *haṁ* and *kṣaṁ* exist in the clockwise direction (going round from left to right, keeping the right side towards one circumambulated as as a mark of respect). I bow down to these which are the two-lettered Brahman. The lotus that exists in the throat laryngeal or pharyngeal plexus has sixteen petals (*viśuddhā-chakra*); in these are in due order in right hand direction the sixteen letters (vowels) *a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, ṛi, ṛī, lṛi, lṛī, e, ai, o, au, aṁ, aḥ;* I bow down to these which are the sixteen-lettered Brahman. The lotus that exists in the heart, the cardiac plexus (*anāhata-chakra*), has twelve petals; wherein are the twelve letters *k, kh, g, gh, n, ch, chh, j, jh, ñ, ṭ, ṭh;* I bow to to these twelve-lettered Brahman. The Solar plexus forms the great junction of the right and left sympathetic chains *īdā* and *piṅgalā* with the cerebrospinal axis. The lotus that exists in the navel, called the Solar Plexus, or Epigastric plexus (*maṇipura-chakra*) has ten petals wherein are the ten letters *d, dh, n, t, th, d, dh, n, p, ph*, counting in the clockwise direction (and the action of this clock is vertical in the plane of

the spinal cord; also it may be horizontal). The lotus that exists at the root of the genital organ, the genital plexus or postatic plexus has six petals. The petals are the configurations made by the position of *nādis* at any particular center. *Svādhisthāna-chakra* or *Svayambhu-liṅga*, wherein are situated the six letters, *b, bh, m, y, r, l;* I bow down to this six-lettered Brahman. (These are the *laya* centers). The lotus that exists in the Mūlādhāra, called the sacral or sacrococcygeal plexus has four petals, wherein are the four letters *v, ś, ṣ, s*. I bow down to this four-lettered Brahman. In the above six nerve centers, *laya* centers, or lotuses, all the letters are situated in the clockwise direction.

Nārāyaṇa continued: "Thus meditating on the six *chakras* or plexuses, meditate on the *kula-kuṇḍalinī*, the serpent fire. She resides on the four-petalled lotus (center of Śakti) called *mūlādhāra-chakra* (Coccygeal plexus); She is of *rajo-guṇa;* She is of a blood red color, and She is expressed by the *mantra* ***hṛīṁ***, which is the *māyā-bīja;* she is subtle as the thread of the fibrous stock of the water lily. The Sun is Her face; fire is Her breasts; he attains *jīvanmukti* (liberation while living) within whose heart such a *kula-kuṇḍalinī* arises and awakens even once. Thus meditating on *kula-kuṇḍalinī*, one should pray to Her:

'Her sitting, coming, going, remaining, the thought on Her, the realization of Her and chanting hymns to Her, etc., all are Mine, Who is of the nature of all in all; I am that Bhagavatī; O Bhagavatī! All my acts are Thy worship; I am the Devī; I am Brahman, I am free from sorrow. I am of the nature of everlasting existence, intelligence and bliss.'

Thus one should meditate on one's own Self:

'I take refuge of that *kula-kuṇḍalinī*, who appears like lightning and who holds the current thereof, when going to *brahma-randhra* in the brain, who appears like nectar when coming back from the brain to the *Mūlādhāra* and who travels in the *suśumnā-nādi* in the spinal cord.'

Then one is to meditate on one's own *guru*, who is thought of as one with God, as seated in one's brain and then worship Him mentally. Then the

sādhaka, controlling himself is to recite the following *mantra:* 'The Guru is Brahmā, the Guru is Viṣṇu, the Guru again is the Deva Maheśvara; Guru is Para-brahman. I bow down to that Śrī Guru'."

Here ends the First Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on what is to be thought of in the morning in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter II—Cleansing the Parts of the Body

1-42. Nārāyaṇa said: "Even if a man studies the *Vedas* with six *aṅgas* (limbs), he cannot be pure if he be devoid of the principle of right living (*sadāchāra*) or if he does not practice it. All that is in vain. As soon as the two wings of the young ones of birds appear they leave their nests; so the *chhandas* (the *Vedas*) leave such a man devoid of *sadāchāra* at the time of his death. The intelligent man should get up from his bed at the *brāhma-muhūrta* and should observe all the principles of *sadāchāra*. In the last quarter of night, he should practice in reciting and studying the *Vedas*. Then for some time he should meditate on his *iṣṭā-deva* (presiding Deity). The *yogī* should meditate on Brahman according to the method stated before.

O Nārada! If meditation be done as above, the identity of *jīva* and Brahman is at once realized, and the man becomes liberated while living. After the fifty-fifth *danda* from the preceding sunrise, i.e., 2 hours before the sunrise comes the *usākāla;* after the fifty-seventh *danda* comes the *arunodayakāla;* after fifty-eighth *danda* comes the morning time, when the Sun rises. One should get up from one's bed in the morning time. He should go then to a distance where an arrow shot at one stretch goes. There in the southwest corner he is to void his urine and faeces. Then the man, if he be a *brahmachārī*, should place his holy thread on his right ear and the householder should suspend it on his neck only. That is, the *brahmachārī,* in the first stage of of his life should place the holy thread over his right ear; the householder and the *vānaprasthīs* should suspend the holy thread from

the neck towards the back and then void their faeces, etc. He is to tie a piece of cloth round his head and spread earth or leaves on the place where he will evacuate himself. He is not to talk then nor spit nor inhale hard. One is not to evacuate oneself in cultivated lands that have been untilled, in water, over the burning pyre, on the mountain, in the broken and ruined temples, on anthills, on places covered with grass, on a roadside or on holes where living beings exist. One ought not to do the same also while walking. One ought to keep silence during both the twilights, while one is passing urine or voiding one's faeces, or while one is holding sexual intercourse, or before the presence of one's *guru*, during the time of sacrifice, while making gifts or while doing Brahmā Yajña. One ought to pray before evacuating, thus: "O Devas! O Ṛṣis! O Piśāchas! O Uragas! O Rākṣasas! You all who might be existing here unseen by me, are requested to leave this place. I am going to ease myself here duly." Never one is to void oneself while one looks at *vāyu* (wind), *agṇi* (fire), a Brāhmaṇa, the Sun, water or cow. At the daytime one is to turn one's face northward and at the night time southward, while easing oneself and then one is to cover the faeces, etc., with stones, pebbles, leaves or grass, etc. Then he is to hold his genital organ with his hand go to a river or any other watery place; he is to fill his vessel with water then and go to some other place.

The Brāhmaṇa is to use the white earth, the Kṣatriya is to take the red earth, the Vaiśya is to use the yellow earth and the Śūdra is to apply the black earth and with that he is to cleanse himself. The earth under water, the earth of any temple, the earth of an anthill, the earth of a mouse hole, and the remnant of the earth used by another body for washing are not to be used for cleansing purposes. The earth for cleansing faeces is twice as much as that used in case of urine clearance; in the cleansing after sexual intercourse thrice as much. In urine cleansing the earth is to be applied in the organ of generation once, thrice in the hand. And in dirt clearing, twice in the organ of generation, five times in anus, ten times in the left hand seven times in both the hands. Then apply earth four times first in the left feet and then on the right feet. The householder should clean thus; the Brahmachāri is to do twice and the *yatis* (*sannyāsīs*) four times. At every

time the quantity of wet earth that is to be taken is to be of the size of an *āmalakī* fruit; never it is to be less than that. This is for the clearance in the daytime. Half of these can be used in the night time. For the invalids, one-fourth the above measurements; for the passers-by, one-eighth the above dimensions are to be observed. In case of women, Śūdras, and incapable children, cleanings are to be done until then when the offensive smell vanishes. No numbers are to be observed. Bhagavān Manu says for all the *varṇas* the cleaning is to be done until then when the offensive smell vanishes. The cleaning is to be performed by the left hand. The right hand is never to be used. Below the navel, the left hand is to be used; and above the navel the right hand is to be used for cleaning. The wise man should never hold his waterpot while evacuating himself. If by mistake he catches hold of his waterpot, he will have to perform the penance (*prāyascitta*). If, out of vanity or sloth, cleaning be not done, one is to fast for three nights, drinking water only, and then repeat the Gāyatrī *mantra* and thus be purified. In every matter, in view of the place, time and materials, one's ability and power are to be considered and steps are to be taken accordingly. Knowing all this, one should clean oneself according to rule. Never be lazy here.

After evacuating oneself of faeces, one is to rinse one's mouth twelve times; and after passing urine and clearing, one is to rinse four times. Never less than that is to be done. The water after rinsing is to be thrown away slowly downwards on one's left. Next performing *ācamana* one is to wash one's teeth. He is to take a tiny piece, twelve *āngulas* (fingers) long (about one foot) from a tree which is thorny and gummy. The cleansing twig (for teeth) is thick like one's little finger. He is to chew the one end of it to form a tooth brush. Karanja, Udumbara (fig tree), Mango, Kadamba, Lodha, Campaka and Vadarī trees are used for cleansing teeth. Neem tree also can be used. While cleansing teeth, one is to recite the following mantra: "O tree! wherein resides the Deity Moon for giving food to the beings and for killing the enemies! Let Him wash my mouth to increase my fame and honor! O tree! Dost thou please give me long life, power, fame, energy, beauty, sons, cattle, wealth, intellect, and the knowledge of Brahman." If

the cleansing twig be not available and if there be any prohibition to brush one's teeth that day, (say, Pratipad day, Amāvas, Sasthi and Navamī), take mouthfuls of water, gargle twelve times and thus cleanse the teeth. If one brushes one's teeth with a twig on the new moon day, the first, sixth, ninth and eleventh day after the Full or New Moon or on Sunday, one eats the Sun (is it were, by making Him lose his fire), makes his family line extinct and brings his seven generations down into the hell. Next he should wash his feet and sip pure clean water thrice, touch his lips twice with his thumb, and then clear the nostrils by his thumb and forefinger. Then he is to touch his eyes and ears with his thumb and ring finger, touch his navel with his thumb and little finger, touch his breast with his palm and touch his head with all his fingers."

Here ends the Second Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on cleansing the several parts of the body in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter III—the Glories of Rudrākṣa Beads

1-21. Śrī Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! There are the six kinds of *ācamana:* (1) *śuddha*, (2) *smārta*, (3) *paurānik*, (4) *vaidik*, (5) *tāntrik* and (6) *śrauta*. The act of cleaning after evacuating oneself of urine and faeces is known as *śuddha-śaucha*. After cleaning, the *ācamana* that is performed according to rules, is named as *smārta* and *paurānik*. In places where the Brahmā Yajña is performed, the *vaidik* and *śrauta ācamanas* are done. And where acts, e.g., the knowledge of warfare are being executed, the *tāntrik ācamana* is done. Then he is to remember the Gāyatrī *mantra* with *praṇava* (*āūṁ*) and fasten the lock of hair on the crown of his head, thus controlling all the hindrances (*vighna-bandhanam*). Sipping again, he is to touch his heart, two arms, and his two shoulders. After sneezing, spitting, touching the lower lip with teeth, accidentally telling a lie, and talking with a very sinful man, he is to touch his right ear (where the several Devas reside). On the right ear of the Brāhmaṇas reside fire, water, the *Vedas*, the Moon, the Sun, and *vāyu* (wind). Then one is to go to a river or any other reservoir of water, and

there to perform one's morning ablutions and to cleanse his body thoroughly. For the body is always unclean and dirty, and various substances are being excreted out of the nine holes (doors) in the body. The morning bath removes all these impurities. Therefore the morning bath is essentially necessary. The sins that arise from going to those who are not fit for such purposes, from accepting gifts from impure persons or from the practice of any other secret vices all are removed by the morning ablutions. Without this bath, no acts bear any fruit. Therefore every day, this morning bath is very necessary. Taking *kuśa* grass in hand, one is to perform one's bath and *sandhyā*. If for seven days, the morning ablutions are not taken, or if for three days, the *sandhyās* are not performed, if for twelve days, the daily *homas* be not performed, the Brāhmaṇas become Śūdras. The time for making the *homa* in the morning is very little; therefore lest ablutions be done fully which would take a long time and hence the time for the *homa* might elapse, the morning bath should be performed quickly. After the bath *prāṇāyāma* is to be done. Then the full effects of bath are attained. There is nothing holier in this world or in the next than reciting the Gāyatrī. It saves the singer who sings the Gāyatrī; hence it is called Gāyatrī. During the time of *prāṇāyāma*, one must control one's *prāṇa* and *apāna-vāyu*, to make them equal. The Brāhmaṇa, knowing the *Vedas* and devoted to his *dharma*, must practice *prāṇāyāma* three times with the repetition of Gāyatrī and *praṇava* and the three *vyāhṛtis* (*Āūṁ bhu, Āūṁ bhuvar, Āūṁ svaḥ*).

While practicing, the muttering of Gāyatrī is to be done three times. In *prāṇāyāma*, the Vaidik *mantra* is to be repeated, never a Laukika *mantra* is to be uttered. At the time of *prāṇāyāma*, if anybody's mind be not fixed, even for a short while, like a mustard seed on the apex of a cow-horn, he cannot save even one hundred-and one persons in his father's or in his mother's line. *Prāṇāyāma* is called *sagarbha* when performed with the repetition of some *mantra;* it is called *agarbha* when it is done simply with mere meditation, without repeating any *mantra*. After bathing, *tarpaṇam* with its accompaniments, is to be done; i.e., the peace offerings are made with reference to the Devas, the Ṛṣis, and the Pitṛs whereby invoking blessings from the subtle planes where the high-souled persons dwell.

After this, a clean pair of clothes is to be worn and then he should get up and come out of the water. The next things preparatory to practice *japam* are to wear the *tilaka* marks of ashes and to put on the Rudrākṣa beads. He who holds thirty-two Rudrākṣa beads on his neck, forty on his head, six on each ear (12 on two ears), twenty-four beads on two hands (twelve on each hand) thirty-two beads on two arms (sixteen on each), one bead on each eye and one bead on the hair on the crown, and 108 beads on the breast, (251 in all) becomes himself Mahādeva. One is expected to use them as such.

O Muni! You can use the Rudrākṣas after tying, stringing together with gold or silver always on your *śikhā*, the tuft of hair on the head or on your ears. On the holy thread, on the hands, on the neck, or on the belly (abdomen) one can keep the Rudrākṣa after one has repeated sincerely and with devotion the five-lettered *mantra* of Śiva, or one has repeated the *prānāva* (*āūṁ*). Holding the Rudrākṣa implies that the man has realized the knowledge of Śiva-*tattva*. O Brāhmana! The Rudrākṣa bead that is placed on the tuft or on the crown hair represents the Tāra-*tattva*, i.e., *Āūm̐* Kāra; the Rudrākṣa beads that are held on the two ears are to be thought of as Deva and Devī, Śiva and Śivā.

22-37. The 108 Rudrākṣa beads on the sacrificial thread are considered as the 108 *Upaniṣads* signifying the full knowledge, as sixteen digits of the Moon completed; on the arms, are considered as the *dik* (quarters); on the neck, are considered as the Devī Sarasvatī and Agṇi (fire). The Rudrākṣa beads ought to be taken by men of all colors and castes. The Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas should hold them after purifying them with *mantras*, i.e., knowingly; whereas the Śūdras can take them without any such purification by the *mantras*, i.e., unknowingly. By holding or putting on the Rudrākṣa beads, persons become the Rudras incarnate in flesh and body. There is no doubt about this. By this all sins arising from seeing, hearing, remembering, smelling, eating prohibited things, talking incoherently, doing prohibited things, etc., are entirely removed with the Rudrākṣa beads

on the body; whatever acts, eating, drinking, smelling, etc., are done, are, as it were, done by Rudra Deva Himself.

O Great Muni! He who feels shame in holding and putting on the Rudrākṣa beads, can never be freed from this *saṁsāra* even after *koti* births. He who blames another person holding Rudrākṣa beads has defects in his birth (is a bastard). There is no doubt about this. It is by holding on Rudrākṣa that Brahmā has remained steady in His Brahmāhood untainted, and the Munis have been true to their resolves. So there is no act better and higher than holding the Rudrākṣa beads. He who gives clothing and food to a person holding Rudrākṣa beads with devotion is freed of all sins and goes to the Śiva-loka. He who feasts gladly any holder of such beads at the time of *śrāddha*, goes undoubtedly to the Pitri-loka. He who washes the feet of a holder of Rudrākṣa and drinks that water, is freed of all sins and resides with honor in the Śiva-loka. If a Brāhmaṇa holds with devotion the Rudrākṣa beads with a necklace and gold, he attains Rudrahood.

O intelligent one! Wherever whoever holds the Rudrākṣa beads, with or without faith and devotion, with or without any *mantra*, is freed of all sins and is entitled to *tattva-jñāṇa*. I am unable to describe fully the greatness of the Rudrākṣa beads. In fact, all should by all means wear Rudrākṣa beads on their bodies."

Here ends the Third Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the glories of the Rudrākṣa beads in the Mahā Puranam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IV—the Greatness of the Rudrākṣam

1-11. Nārada said: "O sinless one! The greatness of the Rudrākṣa seed that you have described is verily such. Now I ask, why is this Rudrākṣam so much entitled to worship by the people? Please speak clearly on this point."

Nārāyaṇa spoke: "O child! This is the very question that was asked once by Kārtika, the six-faced One, to Bhagavān Rudra, dwelling in Kailāśa. What He replied, I say now. Listen.

Rudra Deva spoke: "O child Sadānana. I will dwell briefly on the secret cause of the greatness of the Rudrākṣa seed. Hear. In days of yore, there was a Daitya called Tripurā who could not be conquered by anybody. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and the other Devas were defeated by him. They then came to Me and requested Me to kill the Asura. At their request, I called in my mind the great divine weapon named Aghora, beautiful and terrible and containing the strength of all the Devas, to kill him. It was inconceivable and blazing with fire.

For full divine one thousand years I remained awake with eyelids wide open, thinking of the Aghora weapon, the destroyer of all obstacles, whereby the killing of Tripurāsura might be effected and the troubles of the Devas be removed. Not for a moment my eyelids dropped. Thereby my eyes were affected, and drops of water came out of my eyes. Note here how enemies are to be killed. It requires great thought, great concentration, great *yoga* and great powers. O Mahāsena! From those drops of water coming out of my eyes, the great tree of Rudrākṣam did spring for the welfare of all. This Rudrākṣa seed is of thirty-eight varieties. From My *sūrya-netra* (right eye), symbolizing the Sun, twelve yellow colored (*piṅgala*) varieties have come; and from my left eye representing the Moon, the *soma-netra*, sixteen varieties of white color and from my third eye on the top, representing Fire (*agṇi-netra*), ten varieties of black color have come out. Of these the white Rudrākṣams are Brāhmaṇas and they are used by the Brāhmaṇas; the red colored ones are the Kṣatriyas and should be used by the Kṣatriyas, and the black ones are Śūdras and should be used by the Vaisyas and the Śūdras.

12-19. One-faced Rudrākṣa seed is Śiva Himself, made maṇifest and rendered vivid; even the sin incurred in killing a Brāhmaṇa is destroyed thereby. Two-faced or two-headed Rudrākṣam is like the Deva and the Devī. Two sorts of sins are destroyed thereby. The three-faced Rudrākṣam

is like fire; the sin incurred in killing a woman is destroyed in a moment. The four-faced Rudrākṣa seed is like Brahmā and removes the sin of killing persons. The five-faced Rudrākṣam is verily an image of Rudra; all sorts of sins, e.g., eating prohibited food, going to the ungoables, etc., are destroyed thereby. The six-faced Rudrākṣam is Kārtikeya. It is to be worn on the right hand. One becomes freed of the *brahma-hatyā* sin. There is no manner of doubt in this. The seven-faced Rudrākṣam is named Anaṅga. Holding this frees one from the sin of stealing gold, etc., O Mahāsena! The eight-faced Rudrākṣa is Vināyaka. Holding this frees one from the sin of holding an illicit contact with a woman of a bad family and with the wife of one's *guru*, etc., and other sins as well. It enables one to acquire heaps of food, cotton, and gold; and in the end the highest place is attained.

20-35. The fruit of holding the eight-faced Rudrākṣa seed has been said. Now I will talk of the nine-faced Rudrākṣam. It is verily Bhairava made maṇifest. It should be worn on the left hand. By this, the people get both *bhoga* (enjoyment) and *mokṣa* (liberation); they become powerful like Me and get themselves freed at once, without the least delay, of the sins incurred by committing thousands of abortions, hundreds of *brahma-hatyās* (killing the Brāhmaṇas). Holding the ten-faced Rudrākṣa is verily wearing Janārdana, the Deva of the Devas. The holding of which pacifies the evils caused by planets, Piśāchas, Vetālas, Brahmā Rākṣasas, and Pannagas. The eleven-faced Rudrākṣam is like the eleven Rudras. The fruits, the efficacy of which I now describe. Hear. The fruits obtained through the performance of one thousand horse sacrifices, one hundred Vājapeya sacrifices, and making gifts of one hundred thousand cows are obtained thereby.

If one wears the twelve-headed Rudrākṣam on one's ear, the *ādityas* get satisfied. The fruits of performing Gomedha and Aśvamedha sacrifices are obtained thereby. No fear comes from horned buffaloes, armed enemies, wolves and tigers or other murderous animals. Also the several diseases of the body never come to him. The holder of the twelve-faced Rudrākṣa seed feels always happy, and he is the master of some kingdoms. He becomes

freed of the sins incurred in killing elephants, horses, deer, cats, snakes, mice, frogs, asses, foxes and various other animals.

O child! The thirteen-faced Rudrākṣam is very rare; if anybody gets it, he becomes like Kārtikeya and gets all desires fulfilled; and the eight *siddhis* are under his grasp. He learns how to make gold, silver and other metals; he attains all sorts of enjoyments. There is no manner of doubt in this. O Sadānana! If anybody holds the thirteen-faced Rudrākṣam, he becomes freed from the sins incurred in killing mother, father and brothers.

O Son! If one holds on one's head the fourteen faced Rudrākṣam always, one becomes like Śiva. O Muni! What more shall I speak to you? The Devas pay their respects to one holding the fourteen-faced Rudrākṣas and he in the end attains the highest goal, the state of Śiva. His body becomes verily the body of Śiva.

36-40. The Devas always worship the Rudrākṣa seed; the highest goal is attained by wearing the Rudrākṣam. The Brāhmaṇas should hold on their heads at least one Rudrākṣam with devotion. A mālā of twenty-six Rudrākṣams is to be made and tied on the head. Similarly a mālā of fifty seeds is to be worn and suspended on the breast; sixteen each on each of the two arms; twenty-four Rudrākṣams to be worn on the wrists, twelve on each. O Sadānana! If a mālā be made of 108, fifty or twenty-seven Rudrākṣams and if japam be done with that, immeasurable merits are obtained. If anybody wears a mālā of 108 seeds, he gets at every moment the fruit of performing the Aśvamedha sacrifices and uplifts his twenty-one generations and finally he resides in the Śiva-loka."

Here ends the Fourth Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the Greatness of the Rudrākṣam in the Mahāpuranam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter V—Rudrākṣam Rosaries

1-14. Īśvara said: "O Kārtikeya! Now I will speak how to count *japam* (repetition of the *mantra*) with the *mālā*. Hear. The face of Rudrākṣam is Brahmā; the upper summit point is Śiva and the tail end of Rudrākṣam is Viṣṇu. The Rudrākṣam has twofold powers: It can give *bhoga* (enjoyment) as well as *mokṣa* (liberation). Then string or tie together, like a cow's tail, and like the snake's coiling body, twenty-five five-faced Rudrākṣa seeds, thorny and of red, white, mixed colors bored through and through. The *mālā* is to taper as a cow's tail tapers down. In stringing the beads into a *mālā*, it should be seen that the flat face of one Rudrākṣam is in front of the flat face of another Rudrākṣam; so the tail, the pointed end of one, must come in front of the tail or the narrower end of another. The Meru or the topmost bead of the string must have its face turned upwards, and the knot should be given over that. The *mālā*, thus strung, yields success of the *mantra* (*mantra-siddhi*). When the *mālā* is strung, it is to be bathed with clear and scented water and afterwards with *pañcha-gavya* (cow dung, cow urine, curd, milk and ghee); then wash it with clear water and sanctify it with the condensed electrical charge of the *mantra*. Then recite the *mantra* of Śiva (six-limbed), with *hūṁ* added, and collect the rosaries. Then repeat over them the *mantra* "Sadyojāta, etc.", and sprinkle water over it 108 times. Then utter the principal *mantra* and place them on a holy ground and perform *nyāsa* over it, i.e., think that the great cause Śiva and the World Mother Bhagavatī have come into them. Thus make the *saṁskāra* of the *mālā* (i.e., purify it) and you will find then that your desired end will be attained successfully. Worship the mālā with the *mantra* of that Devata for which it is intended. One is to wear the Rudrākṣa *mālā* on one's head, neck or ear and controlling oneself, one should make *japam* with the *mālā*. On the neck, head, breast, or the ears or on the arms, the *mālā* should he worn with the greatest devotion. What is the use in saying it so often? It is highly meritorious and commendable to always wear the Rudrākṣam. Especially on such occasions as taking baths, making gifts, making *japam*, performing *homas* or sacrifices to Viśva Devas, in performing the *pūjās* of the Devas, in making *prāyascittams* (penances), at the time of *śrāddha* and in the time of

initiation, it is highly necessary to hold Rudrākṣam. A Brāhmaṇa is sure to go to hell if he performs any Vaidik act without wearing any Rudrākṣam. It would be offering an insult to Śiva!

15-29. It is advisable to use the true Rudrākṣam with gold and jewels on the head, neck or on one's hand. Never use the Rudrākṣam worn by another. Use Rudrākṣam always with devotion; never use it while you are impure. Even the grass that grows with the air in contact with the Rudrākṣa tree, goes verily to a holy region forever. Jābāla Muni says in the *śruti:* lf a man wearing Rudrākṣam commits a sin, he gets deliverance from that sin. Even if animals wear Rudrākṣam, they become Śiva; what of men! The devotees of Śrī Rudra should always use at least one Rudrākṣa on the head. Those great devotees, who with Rudrākṣam on take the name of the highest self Śambhu, get themselves freed of all sorts of sins and pains. Those who are ornamented with Rudrākṣam are the best devotees. It is highly incumbent on those who want their welfare to wear Rudrākṣam. Those who wear Rudrākṣam on their ears, crown hair, neck, hands, and breast, get Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara under them as their *vibhūtis* (maṇifestations, powers). The Devas and all those Ṛṣis that started the *gotra*, the *ādi-puruṣas* (the first chief men in several families), held with reverence the Rudrākṣams. All the other Munis, that descended from their families, the ardent followers of *śrauta-dharma*, the pure-souled, held the Rudrākṣams. It may be, that many might not like at first to hold this Rudrākṣam, the visible giver of liberation and so well written in the *Vedas*; but after many births, out of the grace of Mahādeva, many become eager to take the Rudrākṣams. The Munis called the Jābāla Sākhīs are famous in expounding the inestimable greatness of Rudrākṣams.

The effect of wearing Rudrākṣams is well known in the three worlds. *puñyam* (great merit) arises from the mere sight of Rudrākṣams; ten million times that merit arises by its touch; and by wearing it, one hundred *koti* times the fruit arises; and if one makes *japam* every day, then one *lakh koti* times the *puñyam* arises. There is no manner of questioning this.

30-36. He who wears the Rudrākṣams in his hand, breast, neck, ears or head becomes an image of Rudra. There is no manner of doubt in this. By holding Rudrākṣams, men become invulnerable of all the beings, become respected like Mahādeva by the Devas and Asuras, and they roam on the earth like Rudra. Even if a man be addicted to evil deeds and commits all sorts of sins, he becomes respected by all on holding Rudrākṣams. By this men are freed of the sin of taking Uchhista and of all the other sins. Even if you suspend a Rudrākṣam *mālā* on the neck of a dog and if that dog dies in that state, he gets liberation! Then what to speak of others! By holding Rudrākṣams, men even if they be devoid of *japam* and *dhyānam* become freed of all sins and attain the highest state. Even if one holds merely one Rudrākṣa seed purified and surcharged with *mantra-śakti*, he uplifts his twenty-one generations, gets to heaven and resides there with respect. I am speaking now further of the greatness of Rudrākṣam."

Here ends the Fifth Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the Rudrākṣam mālā in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VI—the Greatness of Rudrākṣams

1-21. Īśvara said: "O Kārtikeya! Kuśagranthi, Jīvapattrī and other rosaries cannot compare to one-sixteenth part of the Rudrākṣa *mālā*. As Viṣṇu is the best of all the *puruṣas*, the Gaṅgā is the best of all the rivers, Kaśyapa amongst the Munis, Uchchaihsravā amongst the horses, Mahādeva amongst the Devas, Bhagavatī amongst the Devīs, so the Rudrākṣam *mālā* is the best of all the rosaries. All the fruits that occur by reading the *stotras* and holding all the *vratas* are obtained by wearing the Rudrākṣam bead. At the time of making the *aksaya* gift, the Rudrākṣam bead is capable of giving high merits. The merit that accrues by giving Rudrākṣam to a peaceful devotee of Śiva cannot be expressed in words. If anybody gives food to a man wearing Rudrākṣam *mālā*, his twenty-one generations are uplifted, and he ultimately becomes able to live in Rudrā-loka. He who does not apply ashes on his forehead and who does not hold Rudrākṣam and is averse to the worship of Śiva is inferior to a *caṇḍāla*. If Rudrākṣam be

placed on the head then the flesh-eaters, drunkards, and the associates with the vicious become freed of their sins. Whatever fruits are obtained by performing various sacrifices, asceticism and the study of the *Vedas* are easily attained by simply wearing the Rudrākṣam *mālā*. Whatever merits are obtained by reading the four *Vedas* and all the *Purāṇas* and bathing in all the *tīrthas,* and the results that are obtained by immense practice in learning, all are obtained by wearing Rudrākṣam. If at the time of death, one wears Rudrākṣam and dies, one attains Rudrahood. One has not to take birth again. If anybody dies by holding Rudrākṣam on his neck or on his two arms, he uplifts his twenty-one generations and lives in Rudra-loka. Be he a Brāhmaṇa or a Caṇḍāla, be he with qualities or without qualities, if he applies ashes to his body and wears Rudrākṣam he surely attains Śivahood. Be he pure or impure; whether he eats uneatables or be he a Mlechha or a Caṇḍāla or a great sinner, anybody if he holds Rudrākṣam is surely equal to Rudra. There is no doubt about this.

If anybody holds Rudrākṣam on his head he gets *koti* times the fruit; on his ears, ten *koti* times the fruit, on his neck, one hundred *koti* times the fruit; on his holy thread, *ayuta* times the fruit; on his arm, one *lākh koti* times the fruit and if one wears Rudrākṣam on one's wrist, one attains *mokṣa*. Whatever acts mentioned in the *Vedas* be performed with Rudrākṣam on, the fruits obtained are unbounded. Even if a man be without any *bhakti* and wears on his neck the Rudrākṣa *mālā,* though he does always vicious acts, he becomes freed of the bondage of this world. Even if a man does not wear Rudrākṣa but if he be always full of devotion towards the Rudrākṣam, he attains the fruit that is got by wearing the Rudrākṣam, he attains Śiva-loka and is honored like Śiva. As in the country of Kīkata, an ass which used to carry Rudrākṣam seed got Śivahood after his death, so any man, whether he be a *jñāṇi* (wise) or *ajñāṇi* (unwise), gets Śivahood if he wears Rudrākṣam. There is no doubt about this."

22-28. Skanda said: "O God! How is it that in the country of Kīkata (Bihar), an ass had to carry Rudrākṣa; who gave him the Rudrākṣams? And what for did he hold that?"

Bhagavān Īśvara said: “O son! Now hear the history of the case. In the Bindhya mountain one ass used to carry the load of Rudrākṣam of a traveller. Once the ass felt tired, became unable to carry the load and fell down on the road and died. After his death the ass came to Me by My Grace, becoming Maheśvara with trident in his hand with three eyes.

O Kārtikeya! As many faces as there are in the Rudrākṣam, for so many thousand *yugas* the holder resides with honor in the Śiva-loka. One should declare the greatness of Rudrākṣam to one’s own disciple; never to disclose its glories to one who is not a disciple nor a devotee of Rudrākṣam, nor to him who is an illiterate brute. Be he a bhakta or not, be be low or very low, if he wears Rudrākṣam then he is freed from all sins. No equal can be to the merit of him who holds the Rudrākṣams.

29-39. The Munis, the seers of truth, describe this holding on of Rudrākṣam as a very great vow. He who makes a vow to hold one thousand Rudrākṣams, becomes like Rudra; the Devas bow down before him. If thousand Rudrākṣams be not obtained, one should hold at least sixteen Rudrākṣams on each arm, one Rudrākṣam on the crown hair; on the two hands, twelve on each; thirty-two on the neck; forty on the head; six on each ear and 108 Rudrākṣams on the breast; and then he becomes entitled to worship like Rudra. If any body holds Rudrākṣam together with pearls, *prabāla*, crystal, silver, gold and gem (lapis-lazuli), he becomes a maṇifestation of Śiva. If anybody, through laziness even, holds Rudrākṣam, sin cannot touch him, as darkness cannot come near light. If any body makes *japam* of a *mantram* with a Rudrākṣa *mālā*, he gets unbounded results. Such a merit giving Rudrākṣam, if one such Rudrākṣam be not found in anyone’s body, his life becomes useless, like a man who is void of *tripuṇḍra* (three curved horizontal marks made on the forehead by the worshippers of Śiva). If anybody simply washes his head all over with Rudrākṣam on, he gets the fruit of bathing in the Ganges. There is no doubt about this. One-faced Rudrākṣam, the five-faced, eleven-faced and fourteen-faced Rudrākṣams are highly meritorious and entitled to worship by all. The Rudrākṣam is Śaṅkara made maṇifest; so it is always

worshipped with devotion. The greatness of Rudrākṣam is such as it can make a king out of a poor man. On this point, I will tell you an excellent *purānik* anecdote.

40-49. There was a Brāhmaṇa named Girinātha in the country of Kosala. He was proficient in the *Vedas* and *Vedāngas*, religious and very rich. He used to perform sacrifices. He had a beautiful son named Guṇanidhi. The son gradually entered into his youth and looked beautiful like Kandarpa, the God of love. While he was studying at his *guru* Sudhisana's house, he, by his beauty and youth captivated the mind of his *guru's* wife named Muktāvalī. The *guru's* wife became so much enchanted by his extraordinary beauty that she, being unable to control herself, mixed with him and for some time remained with him in secret enjoyment. Then feeling inconveniences, due to the fear of his *guru*, to enjoy her freely, used poison to the *guru*, killed him and then he began to live freely with her. Next when his father and mother came to know about this, he put to death instantly his father and mother, administering poison to them. He became addicted to various pleasures, and his wealth was exhausted gradually. He began to steal from Brāhmaṇas' houses and became addicted very much to drinking. His relatives outcast him from society for his bad behavior, and banished him outside the town. He then went into a dense forest with Muktāvalī; and he began to kill the Brāhmaṇas for their wealth. Thus a long time passed away, when at last he fell into the jaws of death.

50-54. Then to take him to the region of death, thousands of Yama's messengers came; at the same time the Śiva's messengers came from Śiva-loka. O Kārtikeya! A quarrel then ensued between both the parties of Yama and Śiva. The Yama's messengers then said: "O servants of Śambhu! What are the merits of this man, that you have come to take him? First speak to us of his merits." Śiva's messengers spoke: "Fifteen feet below the ground where this man died, there exists the Rudrākṣam. O Yama's messengers! By the influence of that Rudrākṣam, all his sins are destroyed; and we have come to take him to Śiva." Then the Brāhmaṇa Guṇanidhi assumed a divine form and, getting on an aerial car went with Śiva's messengers

before Śiva. O one of good vows! Thus I have described briefly to you the greatness of Rudrākṣam. This is capable to remove all sorts of sins and yield great merits."

Here ends the Sixth Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the Greatness of Rudrākṣams in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VII—the Greatness of One Faced etc., Rudrākṣam

1-4. Śrī Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! When Girīśa thus explained to Kārtikeya the greatness of Rudrākṣam, he became satisfied. Now I have spoken to you of the glories of the Rudrākṣams as far as I know. Now, as to our subject of right way of acting, I will now speak on other things that ought to be known. Listen. The seeing of Rudrākṣam brings a *lakh* times of *puñyam,* and *koti* times the merit arises from touching that; holding it brings in *koti* times merit; again if one makes the *japam* of a *mantra* with that Rudrākṣam, one obtains merit one hundred *lakh koti* times and one thousand *lakh koti* times the merit. The merit in holding the Rudrākṣam is far superior to that in holding Bhadrāksam. The Rudrākṣam seed that is of the size of an *āmalakī* is the best; which is the of the size of a plum, is middling; and which is of the size of a gram is the worst. This is My word and promise.

The Rudrākṣam tree is of four kinds: Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra. The white color is Brāhmaṇa; the red color is Kṣatriya; the yellow color is Vaiśya and the black colored Rudrākṣam seed is Śūdra. The Brāhmaṇas are to use the white colored Rudrākṣams; the Kṣatriyas, the red colored ones, the Vaiśyas, the yellow colored ones; and the Śūdras, the black ones. Those Rudrākṣa seeds that are nicely circular, smooth, hard, and whose thorns or points are distinctly visible, are the best. Those that are pierced by insects, broken in parts, whose thorns are not clearly visible, with swells and holes and those that are coated over, these six varieties of Rudrākṣams are faulty. Those Rudrākṣams that have their holes by nature

running through and through are best; and those that have their holes pierced by men are middling. The Rudrākṣa seeds that are all of uniform shape, bright, hard, and beautifully circular should be strung together by a silken thread. How to test the Rudrākṣa seed? As gold is tested by a touch stone; so the Rudrākṣam is tested by drawing lines on it; those on which the lines are most uniform, bright and beautiful are the best and they should be worn by the Śaivas. One should hold one Rudrākṣam on the crown hair, thirty on the head, thirty six on the neck; sixteen on each arm, twelve on each wrist, fifty on the shoulders, 108 Rudrākṣams in the place of the sacrificial thread; and the devotee should have two or three rounds on the neck. On the earrings, on the crown of the head, the head, on bracelets, on armlets, on necklace, on the ornament worn on the loins one should hold Rudrākṣam always, whether one sleeps or eats. Holding three hundred Rudrākṣams is the lowest; holding five hundred is middling; holding one thousand Rudrākṣams is the best; so one ought to wear one thousand Rudrākṣams. At the time of taking Rudrākṣam on one's head, one should utter the *mantra* of Īsāna; the *mantra* of Tat Puruṣa while holding on one's ears; Aghora *mantra* on one's forehead and heart; and the *vīja* of Aghora *mantra*, ***hasau*** while holding on one's hands. One should wear the *mālā* of fifty Rudrākṣa seeds, suspended up to the belly, uttering the Vāmadeva *mantra*, i.e., *sadyojātādi*, etc., the five Brahmā *mantras*, and the six-limbed Śiva *mantra*. One is to string every Rudrākṣa seed, uttering the root *mantra* and then hold it. One-faced Rudrākṣa reveals *paratattva* (the highest *tattva*) when worn, the knowledge of the highest *tattva* arises; the Brahmā is seen then. The two-faced Rudrākṣam is Ardhanārīśvara, the Lord of the other half which represents women (in the same person); if worn, Ardhanārīsvara Śiva is always pleased with that man who holds it. The three-faced Rudrākṣam is fire made maṇifest; it destroys in a moment the sin of killing a woman.

The three-faced Rudrākṣam is the three Agṇis: Dakśiṇāgni, Gārhapatya, and Āhavaniya; Bhagavān Agṇi is always pleased with that man who wears the three-faced Rudrākṣam. The four-faced Rudrākṣam is Brahmā Himself. The wearer gets his prosperity enhanced, his diseases destroyed,

the divine knowledge springs in him and his heart is always pleased. The five-faced Rudrākṣam is the five-faced Śiva Himself; Mahādeva gets pleased with him who holds it. The presiding Deity of the six-faced Rudrākṣam is Kārtikeya. Some Paṇḍitas take Ganapati to be the presiding Deity of the six-faced Rudrākṣam. The presiding Deity of the seven-faced Rudrākṣam is the seven Mātṛkās, the Sun and the seven Ṛṣis. By putting on this, the prosperity is increased, health and the pure knowledge are established. It should be put on when one becomes pure. The presiding Deity of the eight-faced Rudrākṣam is Brāhmī, the eight Mātṛkās. By holding this, the eight Vasus are pleased and the river Ganges is also pleased. The putting on of this makes the *jīvas* truthful and pleasant-minded. The Devatā of the nine-faced Rudrākṣam is Yama; holding this puts off the fears of Death. The Devatā of the ten-faced Rudrākṣam is the ten quarters, the ten quarters are pleased with him who wears the ten-faced Rudrākṣam. The Devata of the eleven-mouthed Rudrākṣam is the eleven Rudrās and Indra. Holding this enhances happiness. The twelve-faced Rudrākṣam is Viṣṇu made maṇifest; its Devatās are the twelve *ādityas;* the devotees of Śiva should hold this. The thirteen-faced Rudrākṣam, if worn, enables one to secure one's desires; he does nowhere experience failures. Kāma-deva becomes pleased with him who wears this. The fourteen-faced Rudrākṣam destroys all diseases and gives eternal health. While holding this, one ought not to take wine, flesh, onion, garlic, Sajñā fruit, Chāltā fruit and the flesh of the boar which eats excrements, etc. During the lunar and solar eclipses, during the Uttarāyana *śamkrānti* or the Dakśiṇāyana *śamkrānti*, during the full Moon or the new Moon day, if Rudrākṣam be worn, one becomes instantly freed of all one's sins."

Here ends the Seventh Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the greatness of one faced, etc., Rudrākṣam in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VIII—Bhūta-Śuddhi

1-21. Nārāyaṇa said: "O great Muni! Now I shall tell you the rules of *bhūta-śuddhi*, i.e., the purification of the elements of the body by respiratory attraction and replacement, etc. Firstly, think of the highest Deity Kuṇḍalinī (the serpent fire) rising up in the hollow canal *suśumnā* in the spinal cord from the *mulādhāra* (sacral plexus) to the *brahma-randhra* (the aperture at the crown of the head). Next, the devotee is to meditate on the mantra *haṁsa* and consider his *jīvātmā* (the embodied soul) united with Para-brahman. Then think from leg to the knees in the form of a square Śrī Yantra (diagram as furnished with *vajra* thunderbolt, represented by 63 lines at the four corners); consider this square as the earth, of a golden color and represented by the letter *lam*, representing the seed-*mantra* of earth. Next from the knee to the navel consider the half-moon, and at its two ends consider that two lotuses are situated. Consider this as the circle of water, of white color, represented by the letter *vam,* the seed-*mantra* of water. Then again, from the navel to the heart consider it as of a triangular form and the *svastik* mark at its three angles, and think it as of fire and represented by the letter *ram* its root-*mantra*, of red color. Next from the heart to the center of the eyebrows, consider as marked with six dots, with the seed-*mantra yam* of a smoke color (dark-red) and of a circular appearance and consider it as air. Then again from the center of the eyebrows to the crown of the head consider as *ākāśa-maṇḍalam* (a region of ether) beautiful and clear and with *ham* as its *bīja* letter. Thus thinking, consider firstly the earthy principle originated from watery principle, dissolved in water. Then think water as dissolved in fire, its cause; fire dissolved in air, its cause; and air dissolved in *ākāśa* ether, its cause; then consider *ākāśa* dissolved in its cause *ahaṅkāra,* egotism; then again *ahaṅkāra* dissolved in the great principle (*mahātattva*); and *mahātattva* again in its cause Prakṛti, and consider Prakṛti again diluted in its cause, the Supreme Self. Then consider your own Self as the highest knowledge, and only that. Think, then, of the *pāpa-puruṣa*, the sinful man in your body. The size of this man is that of a thumb, and it is situated in the left abdomen. The head of him is represented by *brahma-hātyā* (murdering a Brāhmaṇa); his area as stealing gold; his heart as drinking wine; his loins as

going to the wife of his *guru*, his legs as mixing with people who go to their *guru's* wives, and his toes as representing other sins and venial offenses. The sinful man holds axes and shield in his hands; he is always angry, with his head bent down and his appearance is very horrible. Inhale air through the left nostril thinking of *vam,* the root-*mantra* of air, and make *kumbhaka*, i.e., fill the whole body with that air, and hold it inside, purifying the sinful man; then repeating *ram*, the seed-*mantra* of fire, think the sinful man with his own body burnt down to ashes. Then exhale outside through the right nostril those ashes of the sinful man. Next consider the ashes due to the burning of the sinful man, as rolled and turned into a round ball with the nectar seed of the Moon. Think steadily this ball as transformed into a golden egg by the seed-*mantra lam* of the earth. Repeat then, *ham* the seed-*mantra* of *ākāśa,* and think yourself as an ideal being; pure and clear, and shape thus your body and the several limbs.

Create, then, fresh in an inverse order from Brahman, the elements *ākāśa*, air, fire, water and earth, and locate them in their respective positions. Then by the *mantra* ***sohaṁ*** separate the *jīvātmā* from the Paramātmā, and locate the *jīvātmā* in the heart. Think also that the Kuṇḍalinī has come to the sacral plexus, after locating the *jīvātmā*, turned into nectar by contact with the highest self in the heart. Next meditate on the vital force, the *prāṇa-śakti*, located as follows: 'There is a red lotus on a wide boat in a vast ocean of a red color; on this lotus is seated the Prāṇa Śakti. She has six hands holding, in due order, the trident, the arrows made of sugarcane, noose, goad, five arrows and a skull filled with blood. She is three-eyed. Her high breasts are decorated; the color of Her body is like the rising sun. May She grant us happiness.' Thus meditating on the Prāṇa Śakti, Who is of the nature of the highest Self, one ought to apply ashes on his body in order to attain success in all actions. Great merit arises from the application of ashes on the body. I will now dwell on this subject in detail. Listen. This point of holding ashes on to the body is particularly proved in the *Vedas* and *Smṛtis*."

Here ends the Eighth Chapter in the Eleventh Skandha on Bhūta śuddhi (purification of elements in the body) in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IX—the Rules of Śirovrata

1-43. Śrī Nārāyaṇa said: "The Brāhmaṇas who perform duly the *śirovrata*, the vow to apply ashes on the forehead described below, are the only ones who can attain very easily the highest knowledge, destroying all *avidyā*, ignorance. So much so that the rules of right living and right conduct as ordained in the *śrutis* and *smṛtis* are not necessary to be observed by those who duly and devotedly perform the *śirovrata.* O learned one! It is through this *śirovrata* that Brahmā and the other Devas have been able to get their Brahmāhood and Devahood. The ancient sages glorified highly this *śirovrata*. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra and the other Devas all performed this *śirovrata*.

O wise one! Those that perform duly this *śirovrata* become sinless, though they were sinful in every way. Its name is *śirovrata*, inasmuch as it is mentioned in the first part of the *Atharva-Veda*. Only this *vrata* (vow) is called *śirovrata;* no other thing is denominated by this name. By no other merit can this be acquired. O Muni! Different names are assigned to this *vrata* in different *śākhās;* in fact, they are all one and the same.

Pāsupata-vrata, Śiva-vrata etc. are the different names assigned to it. In all the *śākhās*, the one substance, intelligence solidified named Śiva, and the knowledge thereof is mentioned. This is *śirovrata*. He who does not perform this *śirovrata* is irreligious and is banished from all religious acts, though he is well-qualified in all branches of learning. There is no manner of doubt in this. This *śirovrata* is like the blazing fire in wholly destroying the forest of sins. All knowledge flashes before him who performs this *śirovrata*. The *Atharva-śruti* expounds the subtle and particularly incomprehensible things; this *śruti* declares the above *śirovrata* as to be done daily; so it is one of the daily observances.

"Fire is ashes," "water is ashes," "earth is ashes," "air is ashes," "ether or ākāśa is ashes," "all this maṇifest universe is ashes."

These six *mantras* stated in the *Atharva-Veda* are to be recited; after this, ashes are to be smeared all over the body. This is named the *śirovrata*.

The devotee is to put on these ashes named *śirovrata* during his *sandhyopāsanā*, practicing *sandhyā* thrice a day, so long as *brahma-vidyā*, realization of Brahman does not arise in him. One is to make a *saṅkalpa* (resolve) of twelve years before one starts with this *vrata*. In cases of incapability, a period of one year or six months, three months or at least twelve days is to be adopted. That *guru* is considered very cruel and his knowledge will come to an end who hesitates and does not impart the knowledge of the *Vedas* and other things to him who is purified by observing this *śirovrata*. Know him certainly as a very merciful *guru* who illumines the heart by *brahma-vidyā*, just as God is very merciful and compassionate to all the living beings.

One who performs one's own *dharma* for many births acquires particular faith in this *śirovrata;* others can have no faith in this. Rather he gets animosity for this *vrata* because of the abundance of ignorance in him. So one ought never to advise on spiritual knowledge to an enemy who has no faith, rather who has hatred for any such thing. Those only that are purified by the observance of *śirovrata* are entitled to *brahma-vidyā,* and none others. So the *Vedas* command: 'Those are to be advised on *brahma-vidyā* who have performed *śirovrata*.' Even an animal becomes freed of his animal nature as a result of this *vrata;* no sin occurs in killing that animal; this is the decision of the *Vedānta*. It has been repeatedly uttered by Jāvāla Ṛṣi that the *dharma* of the Brāhmaṇas is to put on the *tripuṇḍra,* three curved lines of ashes on the forehead. The householders are instructed to put on this *tripuṇḍra* by repeating the *mantra* ***āūm̐ triyamvaka***. Those that are in the stage of the *bhikṣus, sannyāsis* etc. are to put on this *tripuṇḍra* uttering thrice the *mantra* ***āūm̐ hasaḥ***. Such is regularly stated in *Jāvāla-śruti*. The *vānaprasthis* are to put on this *tripuṇḍra* uttering the *mantra* ***āūm̐ hauṁ triyamvaka****,* purified with the *praṇava* of Śiva. The *brahmācārīs* are to use daily this *tripuṇḍra*

uttering the *mantra* ***medhāvī,*** etc. The Brāhmaṇas are to apply the ashes in three curved lines on the forehead.

Śiva is always hidden under the cover of ashes; so the Śaivas, the devotees of Śiva are especially to use *tripuṇḍra*. The Brāhmaṇas are to use daily this Tripuṇḍra. Brahmā is the prime Brāhmaṇa. When He used *tripuṇḍra* on His forehead, what need to tell then that every Brāhmaṇa ought always to use it! Never fail, out of error, to besmear your body with the ashes as prescribed in the *Vedas* and worship the Śiva-*liṅgam*. The *sannyāsins* are to apply *tripuṇḍra* on their forehead, arms, chest and belly uttering the ***āūṁ triyamvaka*** *mantra* and also the five-lettered *mantra* of Śiva ***āūṁ namaḥ śivāya***. The *brahmācārīs* should use *tripuṇḍra* of ashes obtained from their own fire, uttering the *mantra* **triyāyusam jamadagneḥ**," etc., or the *mantra* ***medhāvī*** etc. The Śūdras in the service of the Brāhmaṇas are to use the ashes with devotion, with the *mantra namaḥ śivāya.* The other ordinary persons can use the *tripuṇḍra* without any *mantra*.

To besmear the body all over with ashes and to put on the *tripuṇḍra* is the essence of all *dharma;* therefore this should be used always. The ashes from the *agṇihotra* sacrifice or from *virajāgṇi* (Virajā fire) are to be carefully placed on a clean and pure basin. Cleansing hands and feet, one is to perform *ācamana* twice, and then taking the ashes in the hand, utter the *pañca-brahma mantras:*

sadyojātaṁ prapadyāmi sadyojātāya vai namo namaḥ
bhave bhave nāti bhave bhavasva māṁ bhavodbhavāya namaḥ

"O Lord! Sadyojata I take refuge in the first-born. Never give me desires that are the reason for this countless births and deaths. Please bless me with the desire for liberation. My prayers to Sadyosata."

Then perform short *prāṇāyāma* thrice; he is, then, to utter the seven *mantras* "Fire is ashes," "water is ashes," "earth is ashes" "*teja* is ashes," "wind is ashes," "ether is ashes," "All this whatsoever is ashes" and purify and impregnate the ashes with the *mantra* by blowing out air through the

mouth. Then one is to think of Mahādeva, repeating the *mantra* ***āūṁ apojyoti*** etc., apply dry ashes of white color all over the body and become sinless. After this he is to meditate on the Mahā-Viṣṇu, the Lord of the universe and on the Lord of the waters, and repeat again the *mantras* "Fire is ashes" etc. and mix water with the ashes. He is then to think of Śiva and apply ashes on his forehead. He is to think of the ashes as Śiva Himself and then, with *mantras* appropriate to his own *āśrama,* use the *tripuṇḍra* on his forehead, chest and shoulders.

By the middle finger and ringfinger he is to draw the two lines of the ashes from the left to the right, and by his thumb draw a third line of ashes from the right to the left. *Tripuṇḍra* is to be used in the morning, midday and evening."

Here ends the Ninth chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the rules of śirovrata in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter X—Gauṇa Bhasma

1-33. Nārāyaṇa said: "O knower of Brahman! O Nārada! The ashes prepared from ordinary fire are secondary (*gauṇa*). The greatness of these secondary ashes is to be considered by no means trifling; this also destroys the darkest ignorance and reveals the highest knowledge. It is of various kinds. Amongst the secondary ashes, that prepared from *virajāgṇi* is the best; it is equivalent to that obtained from *agṇihotra-yajña* and it is as glorious. The ashes obtained from the marriage sacrificial fire, that obtained from the burning of the *samidh* fuel, what is obtained from the conflagration of fire are known as the secondary ashes. The Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas should use the ashes from the *agṇihotra* and the *virajāgṇi*. For the householders, the ashes from the marriage sacrificial fire are good. For the *brahmācārīs*, the ashes from the *samid* fuel are good and for the Śūdras the fire of the cooking place of the *Veda*-knowing Brāhmaṇas is

good. For the other persons, the ashes obtained from the conflagration of fire are good.

Now I will talk of the origin of the ashes obtained from the *virajā* fire. The chief season of the *virajā* fire sacrifice is the full-moon night of Citrā *nakṣatra* with the Moon. If this does not take place, the sacrifice may be performed at other seasons; and it should be remembered that the fit place is one's dwelling place. An auspicious field, garden or forest is also commendable for the above sacrifice. On the Trayodaśī Tithi, the thirteenth night preceding the full-moon night, one is to complete one's bathing and *sandhyā;* then one is to worship one's *guru* and bow down before him. Then receiving his permission, the sacrificer is to put on pure clothing and perform the special *pūjā*. Then with his white sacrificial thread, white garlands, and white sandalwood paste one is to sit on a *kuśa* seat with sacrificial *kuśa* grass in one's hands. With his face towards the east or north he is to perform *prāṇāyāma* thrice.

Then he is to meditate on Śiva and Bhagavatī and get mentally Their permissions. 'O Deva Bhagavān! O Mother Bhagavatī! I will perform this vow for my lifetime.' Thus making the resolve, he should start with this sacrifice. But this is to be known, that this *vrata* can be performed for twelve years, for six years, for three years, for one year, for six months, for twelve days, for six days, for three days, even at least for one day. But in every case, he must take mentally the permission of the Deva and the Devī. Now, to perform the *virajā-homa*, one is to light the fire according to one's *gṛhya-sūtras* and then perform *homa* with ghee, *samidh* (fuel) or with *charu*, an oblation of rice, milk, and sugar boiled together. Then on the fourteenth lunar day (Chaturdaśī) one is to pray "Let the *tattvas* (principles) in me be purified" and then perform the *homa* ceremony with *samidh*, etc., as above-mentioned. Now recollecting that 'The *tattvas* in my body are purified,' he is to offer oblations to the fire. In other words, uttering *priththitattvas me sudhyatām jyotiraham virajā vipāpmā bhūyāsam svāhā* one is to offer oblations to the fire. Thus uttering the five elements (*mahā-bhutas*), five *tanmātrās*, five *karmendriyas* (organs of action), five *jñānendriyas* (organs of perception), five

prāṇas, seven *dhātus* (*tvak*, etc.), mind, *buddhi* (intellect), *ahaṅkāra* (egotism), *sattva, rajas and tamah guṇas*, Prakṛti, Puruṣa, Rāga, Vidyā, *kalā* (arts etc,) Daiva (fate), Kāla (time), Māyā *śuddhavidyā*, Maheśvara, Sadā-Śiva, Śakti Śivatattva, etc., respectively by its own name, one is to offer oblations to the fire by the five-lettered Virajā-*mantra*; then the sacrificer will become pure. Then form a round ball of fresh cowdung and purifying it by *mantram* place it on the fire and carefully watch it. On that day, the devotee is to take *havisyānna* (a sacred food of boiled rice with ghee). On the morning of the Chaturdaśī, he is to perform his daily duties as above and then to perform *homa* on that fire, uttering the five-lettered *mantra*. He is not to take any food the rest of the time. On the next day, the full-moon day, after performing the morning duties, he is to do the *homa* ceremony, uttering the five-lettered *mantra* and then take leave of the fire (invoked for worship). He is, then, to raise up the ashes. Then the devotee is to keep *jatā* (matted hair) or to shave clean his head, or to keep only one lock of hair on the crown of the head. He is to take his bath, then; and if he can, then he should be naked or put on a red-colored cloth, hide, or one piece of rag or bark; he is to take a staff and a belt. Washing his hands and feet and sipping twice he by his two hands, is to pulverise the ashes and, uttering the six *atharvan-mantras*, “Fire is ashes” and so forth, apply ashes from his head to foot. Then, as before, he is to apply ashes, gradually to his arms, etc., and all over the body uttering the *praṇava* of Śiva: *vam, vam*. He is to put on the *triyāyusa-tripuṇḍra* on his forehead. After he has done this, the *jīva* (the embodied self) becomes Śiva (the free Self) and he should behave himself like Śiva.

O Nārada! Thus, at the three *sandhyā*-periods; he is to do like this. This Pāśupata-*vrata* is the source of enjoyment as well as liberation and the cessation of all brutal desires. By the performance of this *vrata* the devotee is to free himself gradually of his animal feelings, and then to worship Bhagavān Sada-Śiva in the form of a phallic symbol. The above bath with ashes is highly meritorious, and it is the source of all happiness. By wearing ashes, one’s longevity is prolonged, one gets even great bodily strength, becomes healthy, his beauty increases and he gets nourishment.

This using ashes is for the preservation of one's own self; it is the source of one's good and of all sorts of happiness and prosperity. Those who use ashes (*bhasma*) are free from the danger of plague and other epidemic diseases; this *bhasma* is of three sorts as it leads to the attainment of peace, nourishment, or to the fufilment of all desires."

Here ends the Tenth Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the subject Gauṇa Bhasma (secondary ashes) in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XI—Greatness of the Three Kinds of Bhasma

Nārada asked: "O Bhagavān! How is the above *bhasma* of three kinds? I am eager to hear this. Kindly describe this to me."

Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! I am now talking of the three kinds of ashes; even hearing this destroys one's sins and brings in good fame. When a cow evacuates her dung, just as the cow dung leaves her and is far from reaching the ground, one should catch it with one's hand. This cow-dung burnt with *sadyojātādi*, the *brahma-mantra*, becomes ashes which are called *śāntika-bhasma*, ashes producing peace. Before the cow-dung is about to reach the ground, the devotee should take it with his hand uttering the six-lettered *mantra*, then he is to burn the cowdung. The ashes from this are called *paustik-bhasma*, i.e., ashes leading to nourishment. If the cow-dung be burned with the *mantra* ***hauṁ***, the ashes of this are called *kāmada-bhasma*, ashes leading to the granting of desires.

O Nārada! On the full-moon day, new-moon day or on the eighth lunar day, a man is to get up from his bed early in the morning and be pure and go the cow enclosure. He is to salute the cows and take the cow-dung, uttering the *mantra* ***haum***. If he be a Brāhmaṇa, he is to collect the white cow dung; if he be a Kṣatriya, he would take the red cow dung; a Vaiśya, yellow cow dung and if he be a Śūdra, he would take the black cow dung. Then by the *mantra* ***namaḥ*** he is to form that into a ball and cover it with the husk of rice or some other grain, and dry it in a sacred place, repeating

the *mantra* ***haum.*** Bring fire from a forest or from the house of a Veda-knowing Brāhmaṇa and reduce the cowdung to ashes by this *mantra*, uttering the *mantra haum*. Next take out the ashes carefully from the fire place (*agṇi-kuṇḍa*) and place it in a new jar or pot, again remembering the mantra ***haum***. Mix with the ashes the *ketakī* dust, *pātala* flower dust, the root of the fragrant grass called *khus-khus*, saffron and other sweet scented things with the *mantra satyojātam prapadyāmi*, etc. First perform the water bath, then the bath of the ashes. In case one cannot have the water bath, one is to have the ash bath. Washing the hands, feet and head with the *mantra* ***īśānah sarvavidyānām***, etc., and uttering *tatpuruṣa* one is to besmear one's face with ashes, and by the mantra *aghora* apply ashes on one's chest; with the *mantra* ***vāmadeva*** he is to use ashes on his navel; and with the *mantra* ***sadyo jāta***, etc., all over his body; he is to quit his former cloth and put on another fresh cloth.

Wash your hands and feet and do *ācamana*. It will serve the purpose if one simply uses *tripuṇḍra* and if one does not besmear the whole body with ashes. Before the midday one is to use *bhasma* with water; but after midday, with dry ashes one is to draw the *tripuṇḍra* lines of ashes with the forefinger, middlefinger and ringfinger. The head, forehead, ears, neck, heart, and arms are the places whereon the Tripuṇḍras are used. On the head the ashes are applied with five fingers and with the *mantra* ***haum***; on the forehead, the *tripuṇḍra* is applied with *mantra* ***svāhā*** by the forefinger, mindle finger and ring finger; on the right ear, it is applied with *sadyojāta mantra;* on the left ear, with the *vamadeva mantra;* on the neck with the *aghora mantra* by the middle finger; on the chest with the *namaḥ mantra* by the forefinger, middle finger and ring finger; on the right arm with the *vasat mantra* by the three fingers; on the left arm with the *ham mantra* by the three fingers; and on the navel, the ashes are to be applied with the *mantra* ***īśānah sarva devānām*** by the middle finger.

The first line in every *tripuṇḍra* is Brahmā; the second line is Viṣṇu; and the third, topmost line is Mahādeva. The line of ashes that is marked by one finger is Īśvara. The head is the place of Brahmā; the forehead is the site of

Īśvara; the two ears are the seats of the two Aśvins and the neck is where Gaṇeśa resides. The Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras are to use *tripuṇḍra* without any *mantra;* they are also not to use the ashes on the whole body. The lowest classes (e.g. the *caṇḍālas*, etc.,) and uninitiated persons are to use the *tripuṇḍrak* without any *mantra."*

Here ends the Eleventh Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the description of the greatness of the three kinds of Bhasmas in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XII—the Greatness of Wearing Tripuṇḍra

1-20. Śrī Nārāyaṇa said: "O Devaṛṣi Nārada! Hear now the great secret and the fruits of smearing one's body with ashes, yieding all desires. The pure cow-dung of the *kapila* (brown) cow is to be taken up by the hand before it reaches the ground. It should not be like mire, i.e., not like a liquid; it should not be also very hard nor should it emit a bad stench.

And in case the cow-dung has already fallen on the earth has to be taken, it should be scraped off from the top and bottom; make it into a ball and then burn it in a pure fire, repeating the principal *mantra*. Take the ash, tie it in a piece of cloth and keep it in a pot. The pot in which the ashes are to be kept should be nice and good, hard, clean and sprinkled over for purification. Uttering the principal *mantra*, one is to keep the ashes in the pot. The pot may be of metal, wood, earth, or cloth; or it can be kept in any other nice pot. The ashes can be kept in a silken bag where the *mohurs* are kept. In going to a distant land, the devotee can take the ashes himself or keep with his accompanying servant. When it is to be given to somebody, it is to be given with both hands; never with one hand. Never keep it in an unholy place. Never apply feet to the ashes, nor throw it in an ordinary place nor ever cross it by your legs. Use always the ashes after purifying it with *mantra.* These rules of holding the *bhasma* are according to the *Smṛtis*. By wearing *bhasma* in this way, the devotee becomes, no doubt, like Śiva. The ashes that the *Vaidik* devotees of Śiva prepare are to be taken with devotion.

All can ask for that. But the ashes that the followers of the *Tantra* cult prepare, are taken by the *Tāntriks* only; it is prohibited to the *Vaidiks*. The Śūdras, Kāpālikas, and other heretics (e.g., Jains, Buddhists) can use the *tripuṇḍra*. Never do they conceive in their minds that they would not take the *tripuṇḍra*, wearing of *bhasma* (ashes) is according to the *Vedas*. Therefore one who does not apply it falls down. The Brāhmaṇas must use the *tripuṇḍra*, repeating the *mantra;* and they are to besmear their whole body with ashes; if they don't do so, they are surely fallen. He can never expect to get liberation even after *koti* births who does not besmear his body with ashes devotedly and who does not wear *tripuṇḍra*.

O Nārada! The vile man who does not wear *bhasma* duly, know the birth of that man as futile as the birth of a hog. Consider that body as a burning ground which does not bear the *tripuṇḍra* marks. The virtuous man should not cast a glance at him even. Fie on that forehead which does not carry the *tripuṇḍra!* Fie on that village which has not a single temple of Śiva! Fie on that birth which is void of the worship of Śiva! Fie on that knowledge which is void of the knowledge of Śiva. Know them to be the slanderers of Śiva who mock at *tripuṇḍra*. Those that put on the *tripuṇḍra* bear Śiva in their forehead. The Brāhmaṇa who is *niragṇik* (without the holy fire) is not nice in every way. So the worship of Śiva not done with any *tripuṇḍra* is not praiseworthy, even it be attended with abundance of other offerings. Those who do not besmear their bodies with ashes or who do not use the *tripuṇḍra*, get their previous good deeds converted into bad ones.

21-42. Unless the Tripuṇḍra mark is taken up according to the *śāstras,* the *Vaidik karmas* (works) or those performed according to the *Smṛtis* prove injurious; the good works whatsoever done by any man count for nothing; the holy words heard seem as if unheard and the study of the *Vedas* counted as if not studied. Study of the *Vedas*, sacrifices, charities, asceticism, vows and fasting of that man who does not use the *tripuṇḍra*, all become fruitless. Without using *bhasma* (ashes) if one wants liberation, then that desire is equivalent to live after taking poison. There is no doubt about this. The creator has not made the forehead vertically high nor round; but he has

made it slightly slanting and curved, fit to wear the *tripuṇḍra*. Making thus the forehead, the creator wants, as it were, to inform everyone that everyone ought to use *tripuṇḍra* marks; the curved lines also are made visible for this purpose. Still the igorant illiterate man does not put on the *tripuṇḍra*. Unless the Brāhmaṇas use the curved *tripuṇḍras*, their meditation won't be successful; they will not have liberation, knowledge, nor their asceticism would bear any fruit. As the Śūdras have no right in the study of the *Vedas*, so the Brāhmaṇas have not any right to perform the worship of Śiva, etc., unless they use the *tripuṇḍra*.

First of all, facing eastward, and washing hands and feet, he ought to make a resolve and then take a bath of the ashes mentally, controlling his breath. Then taking the ashes of the *agṇihotra* sacrifice, he is to put some ashes on his own head, uttering *īśāna-mantra*. Then he is to recite the *puruṣa-śūkta mantra* and apply ashes on his face; with the *aghora mantra* on his chest; with the *vāmadeva mantra*, on his anus; with *sadyojāta mantra* on his legs; and with the *mantra āūṁ*, he is to besmear his whole body with ashes. This is called the bath of fire by the Munis. So to bring all actions to a successful issue one is to take first of all this bath of fire. Washing his hands, then, he is to make *ācamana* duly; and, according to the above-mentioned rules, he is to apply ashes on his forehead, heart, and all round the neck with the five *mantras* above-mentioned; or with each *mantra* he is to apply the *tripuṇḍra*. Thus all works are fructified and he gets the right to do all the *Vaidik* actions. The Śūdras, even, are not to use the ashes touched by the lowest classes. All the actions ordained by the *śāstras* are to be done after being besmeared with ashes of the *agṇihotra* sacrifice; otherwise no action will bear any fruit. All his truth, purity, *japam*, offering, oblations to the sacrifice, bathing in the holy places of pilgrimage and worshipping the gods become useless, for those who do not wear *tripuṇḍra*. No fear of disease, sins, famine, or robbers comes to the Brāhmaṇas who use *tripuṇḍra* and *mālā* of Rudrākṣa, and thus remain always pure. In the end, they get *nirvāṇa* liberation. During the time of *Śrāddhas* (solemn obsequies performed in honor of the manes of deceased ancestors) the Brāhmaṇas purify the rows where persons are fed; so much so that the Devas glorify them. One must

use the *tripuṇḍra* marks before one performs any *Śrāddha, japam,* sacrifice, offering oblations or worshipping the Visvadevās; then one gets deliverance from the jaws of death.

O Nārada! I am now speaking further of the greatness in holding the Bhasma; listen."

Here ends the Twelfth Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the greatness in holding the Tripuṇḍra and Bhasma in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIII—the Greatness of Bhasma

1-20. Nārāyaṇa said: "O best of Munis! What shall I describe to you the effects of using *bhasma?* Only applying the ashes takes away the *mahā-pātakas* (great sins) as well as other minor sins of the devotee. I speak this truly, very truly unto you. Now hear the fruits of using simply the ashes. By using *bhasma*, the knowledge of Brahman comes to the *yatis;* desires of enjoyment are eradicated; improvement is felt in all the virtuous actions of the householders, and studies of the *Vedas* and other *śāstras* of the Brahmachāris get increase. The Śūdras get merits in using *bhasmas* and the sins of others are destroyed. To besmear the body with ashes and to apply the curved *tripuṇḍra* is the source of good to all beings. The *śruti* says so. That this implies the performance of sacrifices by all, is also asserted in the *śrutis*. To apply ashes to the whole of the body and to use *tripuṇḍra* is common to all the religions; it has nothing, in principle, contradictory to others. So the *śruti* says. This *tripuṇḍra* and besmearing with ashes is the special mark of the devotees of Śiva; this again is asserted in the *śruti*. This *bhasma* and *tripuṇḍra* are the special marks by which one is characterised; it is said so in the *Vaidik śruti*. Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Indra, Hiraṇyagarbha and their *avataras*, Varuṇa and the whole host of the Devas, all gladly used this *tripuṇḍra* and ashes. Durgā, Lakṣmī, and Sarasvatī, etc., all the wives of the gods daily anoint their bodies with ashes and use the *tripuṇḍra*. So even the Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Gandharvhas, Siddhas, Vidyādharas and the Munis have

applied *bhasma* and *tripuṇḍra*. This wearing of ashes is not prohibited to anybody; the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras, mixed castes, and the vile classes all can use this *bhasma* and *tripuṇḍra*.

O Nārada! In My opinion they only are *sādhus* (saints) who use this *tripuṇḍra* and besmear their bodies with ashes. In seducing this Lady Mukti (liberation is personified here as a lady), one is to have this gem of Śiva Liṅgam, the five-lettered mantra *Āūṁ namaḥ Śivāyā* as the loving principle, and holding on the ashes as the charming medicine (as in seducing any ordinary woman, gems, jewels and ornaments, love and charming medicines are necessary). O Nārada! Know the place where the person who has besmeared the holy with ashes and who has used *tripuṇḍra* takes his food as where Śaṅkara and Śaṅkarī have taken their food together. Even if anybody himself not using the *bhasma* follows another who has used the *bhasma*, he will be soon honored in the society even if he be a sinner. What more than this, if anybody himself not using the ashes, praises another who uses the *bhasma*, he is freed from all his sins and gets soon honor and respect in the society. All the studies of the *Vedas* come to him though he has not studied the *Vedas*, all the fruits of hearing the *śrutis* and *Purāṇas* come to him, though he has not heard them; all the fruits of practicing *dharma* come to him though he has not practiced any, if he always uses this *tripuṇḍra* on his forehead and gives food to a beggar who uses *tripuṇḍra* on his forehead. Even in countries like Bihar (Kīkata, etc., that have got a bad name) if there be a single man in the whole country whose body is besmeared with ashes and who uses this *tripuṇḍra*, that is considered then as Kāśī (Benares city). Anybody, of a bad or of a good character, be he a *yogī* or a sinner, using bhasma, is worshipped like my son Brahmā.

O Nārada! Even if an hypocrite uses *bhasma*, he will have a good future, which cannot be attained even by performing hundreds of sacrifices. If anybody uses *bhasma* daily, either through good companion or through neglect, he will be entitled, like Me, to the highest worship. O Nārada! Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Pārvatī, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and all the other Devas become satisfied with simply holding on this *bhasma*. The merits that

are obtained by using only the *tripuṇḍra* cannot be obtained by gifts, sacrifices, severe austerities, and going to sacred places of pilgrimages. They cannot give one-sixteenth part of the result that accrues from wearing the *tripuṇḍra*. As a King recognizes a person as his own, whom he has given some object of recognition, so Bhagavān Śaṅkara knows the man who uses *tripuṇḍra* as His own person. They that wear *tripuṇḍra* with devotion can have Bholānātha under their control; no distinction is made here between the Brāhmaṇas and Caṇḍālas. Even if anybody be fallen from the state of observing all the *āchāras* or rules of conduct proper to his *āśrama* and if he be faulty in not attending to all his duties, he will be *mukta* (freed) if he has used even once this *bhasma tripuṇḍra*. Never bother yourself with the caste or the family of the holder of the *tripuṇḍra*. Only see whether the sign *tripuṇḍra* exists on his forehead. If so, consider him entitled to respect.

O Nārada! There is no *mantra* higher than this Śiva *mantra;* there is no Deity higher than Śiva; there is no worship of greater merit-giving powers than the worship of Śiva; so there is no *tīrtha* superior to this *bhasma*. This *bhasma* is not an ordinary thing; it is the excellent energy (semen virile) of fire of the nature of Rudra. All sorts of troubles vanish, all sorts of sins are destroyed by this *bhasma*. The country where the lowest castes reside with their bodies besmeared with ashes, is inhabited always by Bhagavān Śaṅkara, Bhagavatī Umā, the *pramathas* (the attendants of Śiva) and by all the *tīrthas*. Bhagavān Śaṅkara, first of all, wore this *bhasma* as an ornament to His body by purifying it first with *sadyo jāta,* etc., the five *mantras*. Therefore if anybody uses the *bhasma tripuṇḍra* according to rules on his forehead, the writings written at the time of his birth by *vidhātā-brahma* will all be cancelled, if they had been bad. There is no doubt about this."

Here ends the Thirteenth Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the greatness of Bhasma in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIV—the Greatness of Wearing the Vibhūti

1-17. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! Whatever is given as charities to any man besmeared with the holy ashes, takes away instantly all the sins of the donor. The *śrutis, Smṛtis* and all the *Purāṇas* declare the greatness of this *bhasma*. So the twice-born must accept this. Whoever wears this *tripuṇḍra*, of this holy ashes at the three *sandhyā* times, is freed from all his sins and goes to the region of Śiva. The *yogī* who takes a bath of ashes throughout his body during the three *sandhyās*, gets his *yoga* developed soon. By this bath of ashes, many generations are lifted up. O Nārada! This ash bath is many times superior to the water bath. To take once a bath of ashes secures to one all the merits acquired by bathing in all the sacred places of pilgrimages. There is no doubt about this. By this bath of ashes, all the *mahā-pātakas* (great heinous sins) and other minor sins as well are instantly destroyed as heaps of wood are brought down to ashes in a moment by the fire. No bath is holier than this one. This is first mentioned by Śiva and He took Himself this bath. Since then this bath of ashes has been taken with great care by Brahmā and the other Devas and the Munis for their own good in all the virtuous actions. This bath of ashes is termed the bath of fire. So he who applies ashes on his head, gets the state of Rudra while he is in this body of five elements. Those who are delighted to see persons with this ashes on their bodies are respected by the Devas, Asuras and Munis. He who honors and gets up on seeing a man besmeared with ashes is respected even by Indra, the Lord of the heavens. Even if anybody eats any uneatables, then the sin incurred thereby won't touch him, if his body be then besmeared with ashes. He who first takes a water bath and then an ash-bath, be he a *brahmachārī* or an householder or an anchorite (*vānaprasthī*) is freed of all sins and gets in the end the highest state. Specially for the *yatis* (ascetics), this ash bath is very necessary. This ash bath is superior to the water bath. For the bonds of Nature, this pleasure and pain, are cut asunder by this ash bath. The Munis know this Prakṛti as moist and wet; and therefore Prakṛti binds men. If anybody desires to cut asunder this bondage of the body, he will find no other remedy for this in the three worlds than this holy bath of ashes.

18-43. In ancient days the ashes were first offered to the Devī gladly by the Devas for their protection, their good and purification, when they first saw the ashes. Therefore anybody who takes this bath of fire, gets all his sins destroyed and he goes to Śiva-loka. He who daily uses this ashes has not to suffer from the oppression of the Rākṣasas, Piśāchas, Pūtanās and the other Bhūtas or from disease, leprosy, the chronic enlargement of spleen, all sorts of fistulae, from eighty sorts of rheumatism, sixty-four kinds of bilious diseases, twenty-two varieties of phlegmatic diseases or from tigers, thieves, and other vicious planetary influences. Rather he gets the power to suppress all these as a lion kills easily a mad elephant. Anybody who first mixes the ashes with pure cold water and then besmears his body with that and puts on the *tripuṇḍra*, attains soon the highest Brahman. He who wears the *tripuṇḍra* of ashes becomes sinless and goes to the Brahm-loka. He can even wipe off the ordnances of the fate on his forehead to go to the jaws of death, if he uses, according to the *śāstras*, the *tripuṇḍra* on his forehead.

If the ashes be used on the neck, then the sin, incurred through the neck, is completely destroyed. If the ashes be used on the neck, then the sin incurred by the neck, in eating uneatable things is entirely destroyed. If the ashes be worn on the arms, then the sin incurred by the arms is destroyed. If it be held on the breast, the sin done mentally is destroyed. If it be held on the navel, the sin incurred by the generative organ is destroyed. If it be held on the anus, then the sin incurred by the anus is destroyed. And if it be held on the sides, then the sin incurred in embracing other's wives is destroyed. So, know fully, to use ashes is highly commendable. Everywhere three curved lines of ashes are to be used. Know these three lines as Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa; Dakśiṇāgni, Gārhapatya fire and *āhavanīva* fire; the *sāttva*, *rājas* and *tāmas* qualities, heaven, earth and *pātāla* (nether regions). If the wise Brāhmaṇa holds properly the ashes his *mahā-pātakas* are destroyed. He is not involved in any sin. Rather he, without any questioning, gets liberation. All the sins, in the body besmeared with ashes, are burnt down by the ashes, which is of the nature of fire, into ashes. He is called *bhasmaṇistha* (a devotee of *bhasma*) who takes a bath of ashes, who besmears his body with ashes, who uses the *tripuṇḍra* of ashes, who sleeps

in ashes. He is called also *ātmaṇistha*, a devotee of *ātman* (Self). At the approach of such a man, the Demons, Piśāchas, and very serious diseases run away to a distance. There is no doubt about this.

Inasmuch as these ashes reveal the knowledge of Brahman, it is called *bhasita* from *bhasma*, to shine; because it eats up the sins, it is called *bhasma;* because it increases the eight supernatural powers *animā*, etc., it is called *bhūti;* because it protects the man who uses it, it is called *raksā*. As the sins are all destroyed by the mere remembrance of Bhagavān Rudra, so seeing the person using the *tripuṇḍra*, the demons, bad spirits and other vicious hosts of spirits fly away quickly, trembling with fear. As a fire burns a great forest by its own strength, so this bath of ashes burns the sins of those who are incessantly addicted to sins. Even if at the time of death one takes a bath of ashes, though he has committed an inordinate amount of vices, all his sins are soon destroyed. By this bath of ashes, the Self is purified, the anger is destroyed; the senses are calmed down. The man who uses even once this *bhasma* comes to Me; he has not to take any more births in future.

On Monday, *amāvasyā*, also on the full-moon day, if one sees the Śiva-*liṅgam* with his body besmeared all over with ashes, one's sins will all be destroyed. All the sins are not seen; hence the *tithi* is called *amāvas*. If people use *bhasma* daily, all their desires will be fructified whether they want longevity, prosperity or *mukti*. The *tripuṇḍra* that represents Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva is very sacred. Seeing the man with *tripuṇḍra* on, the fierce Rākṣasas or mischievous creatures flee to a distance. There is no doubt about this. After doing *śaucha* (necessary cleanliness) and other necessary things, one bathes in pure cold water and besmears his body with ashes from head to foot. By taking the water bath only, the outward unclean things are destroyed. But the ash bath not only cleanses the outer external uncleanliness but cleanses also all the internal uncleanliness. So even if one does not take the water bath, one ought to take this ash bath. There is to be no manner of doubt in this.

44-47. All the religious actions performed without this ash bath seem as if no actions are done at all. This ash bath is stated in the *Vedas*. Its other

name is the fire bath. By this ash bath both outside and inside are purified. So a man who uses ashes gets the entire fruit of worshipping Śiva. By the water bath only the outside dirt is removed; but by this bath of ashes, both outside dirt and inside dirt are fully removed. If this water bath be taken many times daily, still without an ash bath, one's heart is not purified. What more shall I speak of the greatness of ashes, the *Vedas* only appreciate its glories rightly! Yea, very rightly!

48-50. Or Mahādeva, the gem of all the Devas, knows the greatness of this *bhasma*. Those who perform rites and works prescribed by the *Vedas*, without taking this bath of ashes, do not get even a tithe of the fruits of their works done. Only that man will be entitled to the entire fruits of the *Vedas* who perform this bath of ashes duly. This is the opinion of the *Vedas*. This bath of ashes purifies more even things that are already pure; thus the *śruti* says. That wretch who does not take the bath of ashes as aforesaid is a great sinner. There is no doubt about this. By this bath, greater interminable merits accrue than what is obtained by innumerable baths taken by the Brāhmaṇas on the Vāruṇī momentous occasion. So take this bath carefully in the morning, midday and evening. This bath of ashes is ordained in the *Vedas*. So know those who are against this bath mentioned in the *Vedas*, are verily fallen!

After evacuating oneself of one's urine and faeces, one ought to take this bath of ashes. Otherwise men will not be purified. Even if one performs duly the water bath and if one does not take this bath of ashes, that man will not be purified. So he cannot get any right to do any religious actions. After evacuating one's abdomen of the outgoing air, after yawning, after holding sexual intercourses, after spitting and sneezing, and after easing oneself of phlegm, one ought to take this bath of ashes. O Nārada! Thus I have described to you here the greatness of Śrī Bhasma. I am again telling you more of it specially. Listen attentively."

Here ends the Fourteenth Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the greatness in holding the Vibhūti (ashes) in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XV—*Tripuṇḍra* and *Ūrdhva-pundra*

1-10. Nārāyaṇa said: "Only the twice-born are to take this *tripuṇḍra* on the forehead and the other parts of the body after carefully purifying the ashes by the *mantra* agṇiriti bhasma, etc. The Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, and Vaiśyas are known as the twice-born, (*dvījas*). So the Dvījas ought to take daily this *tripuṇḍra* with great care. O Brāhmaṇa! Those who are purified with the ceremony of the holy thread, are called *dvījas*. For these the taking of *tripuṇḍra* as per *śruti* is very necessary. Without taking this *vibhūti*, any good work done is as it were not done. There is no doubt about this.

Even the *japam* of Gāyatrī is not well performed if this Bhasma be not used. O best of Munis! The Gāyatrī is the most important and the chief thing of the Brāhmaṇahood. But that is not advised if the *tripuṇḍra* be not taken. O Muni! As long as the ashes born of Agṇi are not applied on the forehead, one is not entitled to be initiated in the Gāyatrī *mantra*. O Brāhmaṇa! Unless ashes be applied on the forehead, no one will recognize you as a Brāhmaṇa. For this reason I take this wearing of the merit-giving *tripuṇḍra* as the cause of the Brāhmaṇahood. I speak this verily unto you, that he is recognized as a Brāhmaṇa and literary one whose forehead there is seen the white ashes purified by the *mantra*. He is entitled to the state of a Brāhmaṇa who is naturally very eager to collect the ashes as he collects the invaluable gems and jewels.

11-20. Those who are not naturally eager to collect the *bhasma* as they are naturally eager to collect gems and jewel, are to be known as Caṇḍālas in some of their previous births. Those who are not naturally joyous in wearing *tripuṇḍra*, were verily Caṇḍālas in their previous births; this I tell you truly very truly. Those who eat roots and fruits without holding ashes go to the terrible hells. He who worships Śiva without having *vibhūti* on his forehead, that wretch is a Śiva-hater and goes to hell after his death. He who does not wear *vibhūti* is not entitled to any religious act.

Without taking *vibhūti*, even if you make a gift of Tulā Puruṣa made of gold, you won't get any fruits. Rather you will have to go to hell! As the

Brāhmaṇas are not to perform their *sandhyās* without their holy threads, so without this *vibhūti*, one ought not also to perform one's *sandhyā*.

If at times a man by chance has no holy thread, he can do his *sandhyā* by muttering the Gāyatrī or by fasting. But there is no such rule in holding *bhasma*. If one performs *sandhyā* without having any *vibhūti*, he is liable to incur a sin; as without holding this *bhasma*, no right can come to him to perform his *sandhyā*.

As a man of a lowest caste acts contrary and incurs a sin if he hears the *Veda mantra*, so a twice-born incurs a sin if he performs *sandhyā* without having his *tripuṇḍra*. The twice-born must therefore collect his thoughts with his heart intent on this *tripuṇḍra,* whether it be according to *śrauta* or *Smārta* method; or in absence thereof the *laukika-bhasma*. Of whatsoever sort is the *bhasma*, it is always pure. In the *sandhyā* and other actions of worship, the twice-born ought to be very careful and punctilious in using this *bhasma*.

21-31. No sin can enter into the body of one besmeared with ashes. For this reason, the Brāhmaṇas ought always to use ashes with great care. One is to hold the *tripuṇḍra* six *angulas* high or greater by the fore, middle and ring fingers of the right hand. If anybody uses *tripuṇḍra*, shining and brilliant, and extending from eye to eye, he becomes, no doubt, a Rudra. The ring-finger is the letter *A*, the middle finger is *U* and the forefinger is *M;* so the *tripuṇḍra* marks drawn by the above three fingers is of the nature of the three *guṇas*. The *tripuṇḍra* should be drawn by the middle, fore, and ring fingers in a reverse way (from the left of the forehead to its right).

I will now tell you an anecdote, very ancient. Listen. Once Durvāsā, the head of the ascetics, with his body besmeared with ashes and with Rudrākṣam all over his body went to the region of the Pitṛs, uttering loudly, 'O Śaṅkara, of the form of all! O Śiva! O Mother Jagadambe, the source of all auspiciousness!' The Pitṛs Kavya-Vālās, etc. got up, received him heartily and gave him a seat, and showed him great honor and respect and held many pure conversations with the Muni. During their talk, the

sinners of the Kumbhīpāka hell were crying, "Oh! Alas! We are killed, we are being killed. Oh! We are being burnt!" some others cried, "Oh! Oh! We are cut down." Thus various cries and lamentations reached their ears.

32-40. Hearing their piteous cries, Durvāsā, the prince of the Ṛṣis, asked with a grievous heart the Pitṛs, "Who are those crying?" The Pitṛs replied: There is a city close to our place called Samyamanī Purī of King Yama, where the sinners are punished. Yama gives punishment to the sinners there. O sinless one! In that city the King Yama lives with his terrible black-colored messengers, the personifications of *kāla* (destruction). For the punishment of the sinners, eighty-six hells exist there. The place is being guarded always by the horrible messengers of Yama. Out of those hells, the hell named Kumbhīpāka is very big and that is the chief of the hells. The ailings and torments of the sinners in the Kumbhīpāka hell cannot be described in hundred years. O Muni! The Śiva-haters, the Viṣṇu-haters, the Devī-haters are made to fall to this *kuṇḍa*. Those who find fault with the *Vedas*, and blame the Sun, Gaṇeśa and tyrannise the Brāhmaṇas fall down to this hell. Those who blame their mothers, fathers, *gurus*, elder brothers, the *Smṛtis* and *Purāṇas,* and those as well who take the *tapta-mudrās* (hot marks on their bodies) and *tapta-śūlas* (i.e., those who, being Śaivas, act as they like) those who blame religion (*dharma*) go down to that hell.

41-50. We hear constantly their loud piteous cries, very painful to hear; hearing which naturally gives rise to feelings of indifference (*vairāgyam*).'

Hearing the above words of the Pitṛs, Durvāsā, the prince of the Munis, went to the hell to see the sinners. O Muni! Going there, the Muni bent his head downwards and saw the sinners when, instantly the sinners began to enjoy pleasures more than those who enjoy in the heavens. The sinners became exceedingly glad. Some began to sing, some began to dance, some began to laugh; some sinners began to play one with one another in great ecstasy. The musical instruments Mṛdaṅga, Muraja, Vīnā, Dhakkā, Dundubhis, etc., resounded with sweet sonorous tones (in accordance with five *svaras*). The sweet fragrant smell of the flowers of Vāsanti creepers spread all round. Durvāsā Muni became surprised to see all this. The

messengers of Yama were startled and immediately went to their King Yama and said: 'O Lord! Our King! A wondrous event occurred lately. The sinners in the Kumbhīpāka hell are now enjoying pleasures more than those in the heavens. O Vibhu! How can this take place? We cannot make out the cause of this. O Deva! We all have become terrified and have come to you.' Hearing the words of the messengers, Dharmarāja, mounting on his great buffalo, came there instantly and seeing the state of the sinners sent news immediately to the heavens.

51-60. Hearing the news Indra came there with all the Devas, Brahmā came there from Brahmaloka, and Nārāyaṇa came there from Vaikuṇṭha. Hearing this, the regents of the quarters, the Dikpālas came there with all their attendants from their respective abodes. They all came there to the Kumbhīpāka hell, and saw that all the beings there are enjoying greater pleasures than those in the heavens. They all were astonished to see this; and they could not make out why this had happened. 'What a wonder is this! This *kuṇḍa* has been built for the punishment of the sinners. When such a pleasure is now being felt here, the people won't fear anything henceforth to commit sins. Why is this order of the *Vedas* created by God reversed? Why has God undone His own doing? What a wonder is this! Now a great miracle is before our sight.'

Thus speaking, they remained at a fix. They could not make out the cause of this. In the meanwhile Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, after consulting with the other Devas went with some Devas to the abode of Śaṅkara in Kailāśa. They saw there that Śrī Bhagavān Śaṅkara, with crescent of the Moon on His forehead, was playing there attended always by the *pramathas* and adorned with various ornaments like a youth, sixteen years old. His parts of the body were very beautiful as if the mine of loveliness. He was conversing on various delightful subjects with His consort Pārvatī and pleasing Her mind. The four *Vedas* were there personified. Seeing Him, Nārāyaṇa bowed down and informed him clearly of all the wonderful events. He said:

61-75. 'O Deva! What is the cause of all this? We cannot make out anything! O Lord! Thou art omniscient. Thou knowest everything. So kindly mention how is this brought about!' Hearing Viṣṇu's words. Bhagavān Śaṅkara spoke graciously in sweet words, grave as the rumbling of a rain-cloud: 'O Viṣṇu! Hear the cause of this. What wonder is there? This is all due to the greatness of *bhasma* (ashes)! What cannot be brought about by *bhasma!* The great Śaiva Durvāsā went to see the Kumbhīpāka hell, besmearing his whole body with *bhasma* and looked downwards while he was looking at the sinners. At that time, accidentally a particle of Bhasma from his forehead was blown by air to the bodies of the sinners in the hell. Thereby they were freed of their sins and they got so much pleasure! Such is the greatness of *bhasma!* Henceforth the Kumbhīpāka will no more be a hell. It will be a *tīrtha* (holy place of pilgrimage) of the residents of the Pitrilokas. Whoever will bathe there will be very happy. There is no doubt about this. Its name will be henceforth the Pitri Tīrtha. O Sattama! My *liṅgam* and the form of Bhagavatī ought to be placed there. The inhabitants of the Pitri Loka would worship them. This will be the best of all the *tīrthas* extant in the three *lokas*. And if the Pitriśvarī there be worshipped, know that the worship of the *trilokī* is done.'

Nārāyaṇa said: "Hearing thus the words of Śaṅkara, the Deva of the Devas, He thanked Him and, taking His permission came to the Devas and informed them of everything what Śaṅkara had said. Hearing this, the Devas nodded their heads and said, 'Sādhu! (well, very well)" and began to glorify the greatness of *bhasma*. O tormenter of the enemies! Hari, Brahmā and the other Devas began to eulogise the glories of ashes. The Pitṛs became very glad to get a new *tīrtha*. The Devas planted a Śiva-*liṅgam* and the form of the Devī on the banks of the new *tīrtha*, and began to worship them regularly day by day. The sinners that were there suffering, all ascended on the celestial chariot and got up to Kailāśa. Even today they are all dwelling in Kailāśa and are known by the name of the Bhadras. The hell Kumbhīpāka came to be built afterwards in another place.

76-84. Since that day the Devas did not allow any other devotee of Śiva to go to the newly-created hell Kumbhīpāka. Thus I have described to you the excellent greatness of *bhasma*. O Muni! What more can there be than the glories of the *bhasma!*

O Best of Munis! Now I am telling you of the usage of *ūrdhva-pundra* (the vertical marks) according to the proper province of the devotees. Listen. I will now speak what I have ascertained from the study of the Vaiṣṇava *śāstras*, the measure of *ūrdhva-pundra*, according to the *anguli* measurements, the color, *mantra*, Devatā and the fruits thereof. Hear.

The earth required is to be seen red from the crests of hills, the banks of the rivers, the place of Śiva (Śiva-kṣetram), the ocean beaches, the anthill, or from the roots of the Tulasī plants. The earth is not to be had from any other places. The black-colored earth brings in peace, the red-color earth brings in powers to bring another to one's control; the yellow-colored earth increases prosperity and the white-colored earth gives *dharma* (religion). If the *ūrdhva-pundra* be drawn by the thumb, nourishment is obtained; if it be drawn by the middle finger, longevity is increased; if it be drawn by nameless or ring finger, food is obtained and if it be drawn by the forefinger, liberation is attained. So the *ūrdhva-pundra* ought to be drawn by these fingers, only be careful to see that the nails do not touch at the time of making the mark. The shape of the *ūrdhva-pundra* (the vertical mark or sign on the forehead) is like a flame or like the opening bud of a lotus, or like the leaf of a bamboo, or like a fish, or like a tortoise or like a conchshell.

85-95. The *ūrdhapundra*, ten *angulis* high is the super best; nine *angulis* high, is best; eight *angulis* high, is good; the middling *ūrdhva-pundra* is of three kinds as it is of seven, six or five *angulas*. The lowest *ūrdhva-pundra* is again of three kinds: four, three or two *angulas* high. On the *ūrdhva-pundra* of the forehead, you must meditate Keśava, on the belly you must think of Nārāyaṇa; on the heart, you must meditate on Mādhava; and on the neck, you must meditate on Govinda. So on the right side of the belly, you must meditate on Madhūsūdana; on the roots of the ears, on Trivikrama; on the left belly, on Vāmana; on the arms, on Śrīdhara; on the ears, Hrisīkeśa; on

the back, Padmanābha; on the shoulders Dāmodara; and on the head Brahmarandhra you must meditate on Vāsudeva. Thus the twelve names are to be meditated. In the morning or in the evening time when you are going to make the *pūjā* or *homa*, you are to take duly, single in intent, the above names and make the marks of *ūrdhva-pundra*. Any man with *ūrdhva-pundra* on his head, is always pure, whether he be impure, or of unrighteous conduct or whether he commits a sin mentally. Wherever he dies, he comes to My abode even if he be of a Caṇḍāla caste. My devotees (Vīra Vaiṣṇavas or Mahāvīra Vaiṣṇavas) who know My nature must keep an empty space between the two lines of *ūrdhva-pundra* of the form of the Viṣṇupada (the feet of Viṣṇu) and those who are my best devotees are to use nice *ūrdhva-pundra* made of turmeric powder, of the size of a spear (*śūla*), of the form of the feet of Viṣṇu (Viṣṇu-pada).

96. The ordinary Vaiṣṇavas are to use with *bhakti*, the *ūrdhva-pundra* without any empty space, but the form of it is to be like a flame, the blossom of a lily or like a bamboo leaf.

97-110. Those who are Vaiṣṇavas in name only can use *ūrdhva-pundra* of both the kinds, with or without any empty space. They incur no sin if they use one without an empty space. But those who are My good devotees, incur sin if they do not keep an empty space between the two vertical lines (in the *ūrdhva-pundra* three vertical lines are used). The Vaiṣṇavas who use excellent vertical rod-like *ūrdhapundras,* keeping an empty space in the middle and uttering the *mantra* "Kesavāya *namaḥ*" build My Temple there. In the beautiful middle space of *ūrdhva-pundra*, the undecaying Viṣṇu is playing with Lakṣmī. That wretch, the twice-born who uses *ūrdhva-pundra* without any empty apace kills Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī, seated there. The stupid who uses *ūrdhapundra* without a vacant space goes successively to twenty-one hells. The *ūrdhapundra* should be of the size of a clear straight rod, lotus, flame, a fish with sharp straight edges and with vacant spaces between them.

O great Muni! The Brāhmaṇa should always use the *tripuṇḍra* like the lock of hair on the crown of his head and like his sacrificial thread; otherwise all

his actions will be fruitless. Therefore in all ceremonies and actions the Brāhmaṇas ought to use *ūrdhva-pundra* of the form of a trident, a circle or of a square form. The Brāhmaṇa who knows the *Vedas* is never to use the semi-moonlike mark (*tilak*) on his bead. The man who is of the Brāhmaṇa caste and follows the path of the *Vedas* should not even by mistake use any other mark than those above-mentioned. Other sorts of *pundras* (marks) that are mentioned in other Vaiṣṇava *śāstras* for the attainment of fame, beauty, etc., the *Veda*-knowing Brāhmaṇas should not use them. The *Vaidik* Brāhmaṇas should not use even in error any other *tilaks* than the curved *tripuṇḍra.* If, out of delusion, a man following the path of the *Vedas* uses other sorts of *tripuṇḍras*, he would certainly go down to hell.

111-118. The *Veda*-knowing Brāhmaṇas would certainly go down to hell if they use other sorts of *tripuṇḍras* on their bodies. Only the *tilakas* prescribed in the *Vedas* ought to be used by those who are devoted to the *Vedas*. Those who do not observe the duties of the *Vedas* would use *tilaks* approved by other *śāstras*. Those should use marks approved of by the *Vedas* whose Deity is the *Vedas*. Those who follow the *Tantra-śāstras* different from the *Vedas*, should use marks approved by the *Tantras.*

Mahādeva is the *Vedas'* Deity and, ready to deliver from the bondage of the world, He has prescribed the *tilakas* prescribed in the *Vedas* for the benefit of the devotees. The marks prescribed by Viṣṇu, also a Deity of the *Vedas*, are also those of the *Vedas*. His other *avataras* also use marks approved by the *Vedas*. The *tripuṇḍras* and besmearing the body with ashes are according to the *Vedas*. In the *Tantra-śāstra* different from the *Vedas*, there is the usage of *tripuṇḍra* and other marks. But they are not to be used by the *Vaidikas*— no never.

Those who follow the path of the *Vedas* should use the curved *tripuṇḍra* and *bhasma* on their foreheads according to the rules prescribed in the *Vedas.* He who has obtained the highest state of Nārāyaṇa, i.e., who has realized My Nature, ought to use always on their foreheads *śūla* marks scented with fragrant sandalwood paste."

Here ends the Fifteenth Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the rules of using the Tripuṇḍra and ūrdhva-pundra marks in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVI—Description of *Sandhyopāsanā*

1-24. Nārāyaṇa said: "The greatness of using *bhasma* has been described in detail. No further need be stated on the subject. Now I am speaking of the very holy *sandhyopāsanā* method of *sandhyā* worship of Gāyatrī, the presiding Deity of the morning, midday and evening *sandhyās*, and of the twice-born. Listen.

I shall talk, first of all, of the morning *sandhyā*. The morning *sandhyā* is to be done early in the morning while the stars are visible. When the Sun is in the meridian, the midday *sandhyā* is to be performed; and while the Sun is visibly going down, the evening *sandhyā* is to be recited.

Now again, the distinctions are made in the above three *sandhyās*: The morning *sandhyā* with stars seen is the best; with stars disappeared, middling; and with the Sun risen above the horizon, inferior. So the evening *sandhyā*, again, is of three kinds: best, middling, and inferior. When the Sun is visibly disappearing, the evening *sandhyā* is the best; when the Sun has gone down the horizon, it is middling and when the stars are visible, it is inferior.

The Brāhmaṇas are the root of the tree of the *sandhyā-vandanā;* the *Vedas* are the branches; the religious actions are the leaves. Therefore its root should be carefully preserved. If the root be cut, no branches or leaves of the tree will remain. That Brāhmaṇa who knows not his *sandhyā,* or who does not perform the *sandhyās* is a living Śūdra. That Brāhmaṇa after his death verily becomes a dog. Therefore the *Sandhyās* must be observed every day. Otherwise no right comes at all to do any action.

At sunrise and sunset the time for *sandhyā* is two *dandas* (48 minutes), and if *sandhyā* be not done or rather neglected in the interval, *prāyaścitta* (penance)

is to be performed duly. If the proper time for *sandhyā* expires, one more offering of *arghya* is to be made in addition to the three daily *arghayas,* or the Gāyatrī is to be repeated 108 times before the *sandhyā* is commenced.

At whichever time any action ought to be done, worship first of all the *sandhyā* Devī, the presiding Deity of that time, then do the actions proper to that time. The *sandhyā* performed in dwelling houses is ordinary; the *sandhyā* done in enclosures of cows is middling; on the banks of rivers is good, and the *sandhyā* performed before the Devī's temple or the Devī's seat is very excellent.

The *sandhyopāsanā* ought to be done before the Devī, because that is the worship of the very Devī. The three *sandhyās* done before the Devī give infinitely excellent fruits. There is no other work of the Brāhmaṇas better than this *sandhyā*. One can rather avoid worshipping Śiva or Viṣṇu, because that is not daily done as obligatory; but the *sandhyopāsanā* ought to be done daily. The Gāyatrī of the great Devī is the essence of all the *mantras* in the *Vedas*. In the *Veda-śāstras*, the worship of Gāyatrī is most definitely pronounced. Brahmā and the other Devas meditate in the *sandhyā* times on this Devī Gāyatrī and make *japam* of that. The *Vedas* always make *japam* of Her. For this reason the Gāyatrī has been mentioned as the object of worship by the *Vedas*. The Brāhmaṇas are called Śāktas, inasmuch as they worship the primal Śakti (Force) Gāyatrī, the Mother of the *Vedas*. They are not Śaivas nor Vaiṣṇavas.

Firstly make the ordinary *ācamana* three times, and, while inhaling, drink a little of the *ācamana* water, repeating

> *āūm̐ keśavāya svāhā*
> *āūm̐ nārāyaṇāya svāhā*
> *āūm̐ mādhavāya svāhā*

Then wash your two hands, repeating

> *āūm̐ govindāya namaḥ*
> *āūm̐ viṣṇave namaḥ*

Then rub the lips by the root of the thumb, repeating

āūm̊ madhusūdanāya namaḥ
āūm̊ trivikramāya namaḥ

Then rub the mouth in the same way, repeating

āūm̊ vāmamāya namaḥ
āūm̊ śrīdharāya namaḥ

Then sprinkle water on the left hand, saying

āūm̊ hṛṣīkeśāya namaḥ

Sprinkle water on the legs, saying

āūm̊ padmanābhāya namaḥ

Sprinkle water on the head, saying

āūm̊ dāmodarāya namaḥ

Touch the mouth with three fingers of the right hand (not forefinger), saying

āūm̊ saṅkarsanāya namaḥ

Touch the nostrils with the thumb and forefinger, saying

āūm̊ vāsudevāya namaḥ
āūm̊ pradyumnāya namaḥ

Touch the eyes with the thumb and ring-finger, saying

āūm̊ aniruddhāya namaḥ
āūm̊ puruṣottamāya namaḥ

Touch the ears with the thumb and ring-finger saying

āūm̐ adhokṣajāya namaḥ
āūm̐ nārasiṁhāya namaḥ

Touch the navel with the thumb and little finger, saying

āūm̐ acyutāya namaḥ

Touch the breast with the palm, saying

āūm̐ janārdanāya namaḥ

Touch the head, saying

āūm̐ upendrāya namaḥ

Touch the roots of the two arms, saying

āūm̐ haraye namaḥ
āūm̐ kṛṣṇāya namaḥ

25-50. While sipping the *ācamana* water from the right hand, touch the right hand with your left hand; otherwise; the water does not become pure. While doing *ācamana*, make the palm and the fingers all united and close, of the form of a *gokarṇa* (the ear of a cow) and spreading the thumb and the little finger, drink the water of the measure of a pea. If a greater or less quantity be sipped, then that would amount to drinking liquor. Then thinking of the *praṇava*, make the *prāṇāyāma*, and repeat mentally the Gāyatrī with her head and the *turīya-pāda:*

āpojyotih rasomṛtam brahmā bhurbhuvaḥ svarom

Inhale the air by the left nostril (*pūraka*), close both the nostrils (*kumbhaka*) and exhale the air, by the right nostril (*rechaka*). Thus *prāṇāyāma* is effected. While doing *pūraka, kumbhaka* and *rechaka* repeat the Gāyatrī every time; hold the right nostril with the right thumb and hold the left nostril with the ringfinger and little finger (don't use forefinger and middle finger).

The *yogīs* who have controlled their minds say that *prāṇāyāma* is effected by the three processes *pūraka, kūmbhaka* and *rechaka*. The external air is inhaled in *pūraka;* air is not exhaled nor inhaled (it is retained inside) in *kūmbhaka;* and air is exhaled in *rechaka*. While doing *pūraka*, visualize in the navel, the four-armed high-souled Viṣṇu, of the blue color like the blue lotus (*śyāma*). While doing *kūmbhaka*, visualize in the heart lotus the four-faced grandsire, Brahmā Prajāpati, the creator seated on the lotus; and while doing *rechaka* visualize on the forehead, the white sin-destroying Śaṅkara, pure as crystal. In *pūraka*, the union with Viṣṇu is obtained; in *kūmbhaka*, the knowledge of Brahmā is attained and in *rechaka*, the highest position of Īśvara (Śiva) is attained. This is the method of *ācamana* according to the *Purāṇas*.

Now I am speaking of the all-sin-destroying Vaidik *ācamana*. Listen. While reciting the Gāyatrī *mantra*

āūm̐ bhur bhuvaḥ svaḥ
tat-savitur-varenyam
bhargo devasya dhīmahi
dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt | |

sip a little water; this is the Vaidik *ācamana*.

After *ācamana* repeat the seven great *vyāhritis,* the mystical utterance of the names of the seven *lokas* or worlds, personified as the daughters of Savitṛ and Pṛśni:

āūm̐ bhuḥ
āūm̐ bhuvaḥ
āūm̐ svaḥ
āūm̐ mahāḥ
āūm̐ janaḥ
āūm̐ tapaḥ
āūm̐ satyam

repeat Gāyatrī and the head of the Gāyatrī:

āpojyoti rasomṛtam brahmā bhurbhuvaḥ svarom

and practice *prāṇāyāma* three times. Hereby all sins are destroyed and all virtues spring.

Now another sort of *prāṇāyāma-mudrā* is described: The *vānaprasthīs* and *gṛhasthas* would do *prāṇāyāma* with five fingers, holding the tip of the nose; the *brahmāchārīs* and *yatis* would do *prāṇāyāma* with the thumbs, little finger and ring finger (avoiding middle and forefingers).

Now I am speaking of the *āghamasana mārjana mantra*. Listen. This is a process for external purification of the body. This is also referred to as *mantra-snanah*—purificatory bath through mantras.

Nyāsa indicates the name of the sage, *chhandas* and the Deity to whom it is addressed. When reciting the name of the sage, four fingers of the right hand are placed at the top of the head. While reciting the *chhandas* the fingers are placed on the tip of the nose. While reciting the name of the Deity the fingers are placed on the chest.

Note: Every hymn or *mantra* is preceded by a *śloka* giving the name of *ṛṣi*, *chhandas* (meter or rhythm) and the deity to whom it is addressed (or meditated upon) and the purpose or application. This action is called *nyāsa,* or more precisely *ṛṣi-nyāsa*.

The name of the sage indicates the sage who has realized this *mantra*. God-realization is always linked with *sahasrāra-cakra* at the top of the head, hence we touch the top of the head.

The *chhanda* indicates meter or rhythm, hence we touch the tip of the nose being close to the mouth while reciting the *chhanda*.

The heart is the place where the Lord resides as *antaryāmi*, hence we touch the chest while reciting the name of the Deity.

The *apohista* hymn is akin to sweeping a room clean. The *smṛtis* say that the vibrations created by reciting these hymns have power to protect against infection.

The *mantra* of this *mārjana* is *āpohiṣṭhā mayobhuvah*, thus:

> *sindhu dvīpa ṛṣiḥ* (head)
> *devi gāyatrī chhandaḥ* (nose)
> *āpo devata* (chest)
> *apāṁ prokṣaṇe viniyogaḥ*

Hold the waterpot in the left hand. Take a small quantity of water in the right hand palm. Sprinkle it on the head through right hand fingers, reciting the *mantras* at the same time:

āūṁ̊ āpohiṣṭhā mayobhuvaḥ	(*prokṣaṇa* of the head)
āūṁ̊ tā na ūrje dadhātana	(*prokṣaṇa* of the head)
āūṁ̊ mahe raṇāya chakshase	(*prokṣaṇa* of the head)
āūṁ̊ yovaḥ śivatamo rasaḥ	(*prokṣaṇa* of the head)
āūṁ̊ tasya bhājayatehanaḥ	(*prokṣaṇa* of the head)
āūṁ̊ ushatīriva mātaraḥ	(*prokṣaṇa* of the head)
āūṁ̊ tasmā arañgamāma vaḥ	(*prokṣaṇa* of the head)
āūṁ̊ yasya kṣayāya jinvatha	(*prokṣaṇa* of the big toes)
āūṁ̊ āpo janayathā chanaḥ	(*prokṣaṇa* of the head)
āūṁ̊ bhūr bhuvaḥ svaḥ	

> "O! ye Deities of water, you are in a position to confer on everyone facilities of every kind. Give us strength (*śakti*) to worship the Lord who is exalted, charming with attractive eyes. Oh ye Deities, just as a loving mother does, make us acquire in this world the essence of *bhakti*. We meditate on you to attain that God whose pleasure you have earned by being His abode. Oh ye waters, help us to live a real life."

There are three *mantras* in this. There are three *pādas* in every *mantra*. Prefix *āūṁ̊* to every *pāda* (thus nine times *āūṁ̊* is to be prefixed); at the end of every

pāda sprinkle water on the head with the sacrificial thread and the *kuśa* grass. Or do so at the end of every *mantra*. By the above *mārjana* (cleaning) the sins of one hundred years are instantly destroyed.

Then making *ācamana* (taking a sip of water to rinse the mouth before worship), repeat the three *mantras Āūm̐ Sūryaścha mā manyuścha*, etc. By this act, the mental sins are destroyed. As *mārjana* is done with *praṇava*, *vyāhṛtis* and Gāyatrī, so make *mārjana* by the three *mantras āpohisthā*, etc."

Make your right palm of the shape of a cow's ear; take water in it and carry it before your nose and think thus: "There is a terrible sinful person in my left abdomen, his color is dark black and he is horrible looking." Recite, then, the *mantras Āūm̐ ritamcha satyamchābhīdhyāt,* etc." and *drupādādiva mumuchāna*, etc." and bring that sinful person through your right nostril to the water in the palm. Don't look at that water; throw it away on a bit of stone to your left. And think that 'I am now sinless.' Next, rising from the seat, keep your two feet horizontal and with the fingers save forefinger and thumb, take a palmful of water and with your face towards the Sun, recite the Gāyatrī three times and offer water to the Sun three times. Thus, O Muni! The method of offering the *arghyas* has been mentioned to you.

51-80. Then circumambulate, repeating the Sūrya-*mantra*. The one thing to be noted in offering *arghyas* is this: Offer once in the midday, three times in the morning and three times in the evening. While offering the *arghya* in the morning, bend yourself a little low; in offering the *arghya* in the midday, stand up; and while offering the *arghya* in the evening, it can be done while sitting.

Now I will tell you why the *arghya* is offered to the Sun. Hear. Thirty *koti* Rākṣasas known as the Mandehas always roam on the path of the Sun (the mental Sun also). They are great heroes, treacherous and ferocious. They always try to devour the Sun while assuming terrible forms. For this reason the Devas and the Ṛṣis combined offer the water with their folded hands to the Sun, while they perform the great *sandhyopāsana*. The water thus offered becomes transformed into the thunderbolt, burns the heads of the cruel

demons and throws them on the island Mandehāruna. Therefore the Brāhmaṇas daily do their *sandhyopāsana*. Infinite merits accrue from this *sandhyopāsana*.

O Nārada! Now I am speaking to you of the *mantras* pertaining to the *arghya*. No sooner they are pronounced the full effects of performing the *sandhyās* are obtained.

> "I am that Sun; I am that Light; I am that *ātman* (Self); I am Śiva; I am the Light of *ātman;* I am clear and transparently white; I am of the nature of all energy; and I am of the nature of *rasa*, all the sweet tasteful sentiments. O Devī! O Gāyatrī! O Thou! who art of the nature of Brahman! Let Thee come and preside in my heart to grant me success in this *japa-karma*. O Devī! O Gāyatrī! entering into my heart, go out again with this water. But Thou wouldst have to come again."

Sit thus on a pure seat and with a single intent repeat the Gāyatrī, the Mother of the *Vedas*. O Muni! In this *sandhyopāsanā*, the *khhecharī mudrā* ought to be done after practicing the *prāṇāyāma*. Hear now the meaning of the *khhechāri mudrā*. When the soul of a being leaves the objects of senses, it roams in the *ākāśa*, thus it becomes aimless when the tongue also goes to the *ākāśa* and roams there; and then the sight is fixed between the eyebrows; this is called the *khhechāri mudrā*. There is no *āsana* (seat) equal to *siddhāsana* and there is no *vāyu* (air) equal to the *kumbhaka-vāya,* suspension of air in the body. O Nārada! In the same way there is no *mudrā* equal to the *khhechāri mudrā*. One is to pronounce *praṇava* in *pluta* (protracted) accents like the sound of a bell and, suspending his breath, sit quiet motionless in *sthirāsana* without any *ahaṅkāra* (egotism).

O Nārada! I am now talking of *siddhāsana* and its characteristic qualities. Hear. Keep one heel below the root of the genital and the other heel below the scrotum; keep the whole body and breast straight and motionless; withdraw the senses from their objects and look at the point of the pituitary

body between the eyebrows. This posture is called the *siddhāsana* and is pleasant to the *yogīs*. After taking this seat, invoke the Gāyatrī.

> "O Mother of the *Vedas!* O Gāyatrī! Thou art the Devī granting boons to the *bhaktas*. Thou art of the nature of Brahman. Be gracious unto me. O Devī! Whoever worships Thee in the day gets his day sins destroyed and who worships in the night, night sins destroyed. O Thou! who art all the letters of the alphabet! O Devī! O Sandhye! O Thou who art of the nature of Vidyā! O Sarasvatī! O Ajaye! O Thou immortal! free from disease and decay. O Mother! Who art all the Devas! I bow down to Thee."

Invoke the Devī again by the *mantra Ojosi*, etc. and then pray:

> "O Mother! Let my *japam* and other acts in Thy worship be fulfilled with success by Thy Grace."

Next for the freedom of the curse of Gāyatrī, do the things properly. Brahmā gave a curse to Gāyatrī; Viśvāmitra gave a curse to Her and Vasiṣṭha also cursed Her. These are the three curses; they are removed in due order by recollecting Brahmā, Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha. Before doing *nyāsa*, one ought to collect oneself and remember the highest Self; think in the lotus of the heart that Puruṣa (Person) Who is Truth; Who is all this universe, Who is the highest Self, Who is all-knowledge and Who cannot be comprehended by words.

Now I am speaking of the *aṅganyāsa* of *sandhyā.* Hear. First utter *Āūm̊* and then utter the *mantras:*

> Touch the two legs, saying *Āūm̊ bhuhpādābhyām namaḥ*
> Touch the knees, saying *Āūm̊ bhuva jānubhyām namaḥ*
> Touch the hip, saying *Āūm̊ svah katibhyām namaḥ*
> Touch the navel, saying *Āūm̊ mahārnābhyai namaḥ*
> Touch the heart, saying *Āūm̊ janah hṛdayāya namaḥ*
> Touch the throat, saying *Āūm̊ tapaḥ kanthāya namaḥ*
> Touch the forehead, saying *Āūm̊ satyam lalātāya namaḥ*

Thus perform the *vyāhṛti-nyāsa*. Next perform the *karāmga-nyāsa* thus:

Āūm̊ tat savituh ramgusthābhyām namaḥ (referring to the thumb)
Āūm̊ varenyam tarjanībhyām namaḥ (referring to the forefinger)
Āūm̊ bhargo devasya madhyamā bhyām namaḥ (referring to the middle finger)
Āūm̊ dhīmahi anāmikābhyām namaḥ (referring to the ringfinger)
Āūm̊ dhīyo yonah, kanisthābyām namaḥ (referring to the little finger)
Āūm̊ prachodayāt kara tal pristhābhyām namaḥ (referring to the upper part and lower part of the palm and all over the body).

81-106. Now I am speaking of the *aṅga-nyāsa*. Hear.

Āūm̊ tat savitur brahmātmane hridayāya namaḥ (referring to the heart)
Āūm̊ varenyam viṣṇvātmane śirase namaḥ (referring to the head)
Āūm̊ bhargo devasya rudrātmane śikhāyai namaḥ (referring to the crown of the head)
Āūm̊ dhīmahi śaktyātmane kavachāya namaḥ (referring to the Kavaca)
Āūm̊ dhīyoyonah kālātmane netratrayāya namaḥ (referring to the three eyes)
Āūm̊ prachodayāt sarvātmane astrāya namaḥ (referring to the *astra* or armor protecting the body).

Now I am speaking of the *varṇa-nyāsa*. O great Muni! Hear. This *varṇa-nyāsa* is performed by the letters in the Gāyatrī *mantra*. If anybody does this, he becomes freed of sins.

Āūm̊ tat namaḥ on the two big toes; (touching them)
Āūm̊ sa namaḥ on the two heels; (touching them).
Āūm̊ vi namaḥ on the legs;
Āūm̊ tu namaḥ on the two knees
Āūm̊ va namaḥ on the two thighs
Āūm̊ re namaḥ on the anus
Āūm̊ ni namaḥ on the generative organ
Āūm̊ ya namaḥ on the hip
Āūm̊ bha namaḥ on the navel
Āūm̊ ṛgo namaḥ on the heart

Āūm̊ de namaḥ on the breasts
Āūm̊ va namaḥ on the heart
Āūm̊ sya namaḥ on the throat
Āūm̊ dhī namaḥ on the mouth
Āūm̊ ma namaḥ on the palate
Āūm̊ hi namaḥ on the tip of the nose
Āūm̊ dhi namaḥ on the two eyes
Āūm̊ yo namaḥ on the space between the eyebrows
Āūm̊ yo namaḥ on the forehead
Āūm̊ naḥ namaḥ to the east
Āūm̊ pra namaḥ to the south
Āūm̊ cho namaḥ on the west
Āūm̊ da namaḥ on the north
Āūm̊ yā namaḥ on the head
Āūm̊ ta namaḥ on the whole body from head to foot

Some *jāpakas* (those who do *japam*) do not approve of the above *nyāsa.* Thus the *nyāsa* is to be done. Then meditate on the Gāyatrī or the World-Mother:

> 'The beauty of the body of Gāyatrī Devī is like that of the full blown *javā* flower. She is seated on the big red lotus on the back of the *haṅsa* (swan); She is holding the red-colored garland on Her neck and anointed with red-colored unguent. She has four faces; every face has two eyes. On her four hands are a wreath of flowers, a sacrificial ladle, a bead, and a *kāmaṇḍalū*. She is blazing with all sorts of ornaments. From the Devī Gāyatrī has originated first the *Ṛg-veda*. Brahmā worships the virgin Gāyatrī; on the idea of Śrī Parameśvarī Gāyatrī has four feet. The *Ṛg-veda* is the first; the *Yajur-veda* is the second, the *Sāma-veda* is the third and the *Atharva-veda* is the fourth foot. The Gāyatrī has eight bellies; the east side is the first; the south is the second; the west is the third; the north is the fourth; the zenith is the fifth; the nadir is the sixth; the intermediate space is the seventh and all the corners are the eighth belly. Gāyatrī has seven *śiras* (heads); *vyākaranam* (grammar) is one; *śiksā* is the

> second (that *aṅga* of the *Veda*, the science which teaches the proper pronunciation of words and laws of euphony); *kalpa* is the third (the *Vedāṅga* which lays down the ritual and prescribes rules for ceremonial and sacrificial acts); *nirukta* is the fourth (the *Vedāṅga* that contains glossarial explanation of obscure words, especially those occurring in the *Vedas*); *jyotish* or astronomy is the fifth; *itihāsa* (history) and *Purāṇas* is the sixth head; and *Upaniṣadas* is the seventh head. Agṇi (fire) is the mouth of Gāyatrī; Rudra is the *śikhā* (the chief part); Her *gotra* (lineage) is Sāmkhyāyana; Viṣṇu is the heart of Gāyatrī and Brahmā is the armor of Gāyatrī.'

Think of this Maheśvarī Gāyatrī in the middle of the Solar Orb. Meditating on the Gāyatrī Devī as above, the devotee should show the following twenty-four *mudrās* (signs by the fingers, etc., in religious worship) for the satisfaction of the Devī:

(1) *sanmukh* (2) *sampūt* (3) *vitata* (4) *vistrita* (5) *dvīmukha* (6) *trimukha* (7) *chaturmukha* (8) *panchamukha* (9) *sanmukha* (10) *adhomukha* (11) *vyāpaka* (12) *anjali* (13) *śakata* (14) *yamapāśa* (15) fingers intertwined end to end; (16) *vilamba* (17) *mustika* (18) *matsya* (19) *kūrma* (20) *varāha* (21) *simhākrānta* (22) *mahākrānta* (23) *mudgara* (24) *pallava*.

Next make *japam* once only of the one-hundred syllabled Gāyatrī. Thus twenty-four syllabled Sāvitrī, *jātavedase sunavāma*, etc., the forty-four syllabled *mantra*; and the thirty-two syllabled *mantra*, *tryamvakam jajāmahe*, etc. These three *mantras* united make up the one-hundred lettered Gāyatrī. (The full context of the last Mantra is this: *Āūm̐ haum Āūm̐ yum sah - trayamvakam yajāmahe sugandhim pusti vardhanam. Urbhārukamiva bandhanān mrityo mūksiya ma mritāt bhur bhuvah. Svarom yum svah bhurbhuvah svarom haum*.)

Next make *japam* of *bhur bhuvah svah*, the twenty-four lettered Gāyatrī with *āūṁ*.

O Nārada! The Brāhmaṇa is to perform daily the *sandhyopāsānā* repeating Gāyatrī, completely adopting the rules above prescribed, and then he will be able to enjoy completely pleasures, happiness and bliss."

Here ends the Sixteenth Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the description of Sandhyā Upāsānā in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgvatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVII—Description of Sandhyā and other Daily Practices

1-5. Nārāyaṇa said: "If one divides or separates the *pādas* while reciting or making *japam* of the Gāyatrī, one is freed from the sin of *brahma-hātyā*. But if one does so without breaking the *pādas*, i.e., repeats at one breath, then one incurs the sin of *brahma-hātyā*. Those Brāhmaṇas who do the *japam* of the Gāyatrī without giving due pause to the *pādas*, suffer pains in hells with their heads downwards for one hundred *kalpas*.

O Gāyatrī! Thou art of one foot, of two feet, of three feet and of four feet. Thou art without foot, because Thou art not obtained. Salutation to Thy fourth foot, beautiful and which is above the *trilokī* (*rājas*). This cannot obtain that.

Firstly, Gāyatrī is of three kinds: *samputā*, *ekomkārā* and *sadomkārā*. There is also the Gāyatrī with five *praṇavas*, according to the *dharma-śāstras* and *Purāṇas*. There is something to be noted while muttering or making the *japam* of the Gāyatrī: Note how many lettered Gāyatrī you are going to repeat. When you have repeated one-eighth of that, repeat the *turīya pāda* of Gāyatrī (i.e., the fourth *pāda*, the *mantram* ***paro rajase sāvadomā prāpat***) etc., once and then complete repeating the Gāyatrī. If the Brāhmaṇa makes the *japam* (the silent muttering) in the above way he gets himself united with Brahman. Other modes of making the *japam* do not bear any fruit.

Āūṁ̐ Gāyatryasye kapadī dvīpapī
Tripadī chatus pādasi nahi padyase namaste

Tūryāya darśatāyapadāya paro
Rajase Sābado mā prāpat.

Gāyatrī is one-footed in the form of *trilokī*, two-footed, the *trayī vidyā* from Thy second foot; *tripadī* (all *prāṇas* are Thy third foot, *chatuspadi*, as the *puruṣa apadi* without any foot, *parorajase* above the *rājas*, the dust; *asau*–that; *adah* this not; *prāpat* may obtain.

The *yogīs* who are *ūrdharetās* (hold *brahmācharyam*, continence) are to make *japam* of the *samputā*-Gāyatrī (i.e., with *āūṁ*). Gāyatrī with one *praṇava* and as well the Gāyatrī with six *praṇavas*. The householder-*brahmachārī* or those who want *mokṣa* are to make *japam* of Gāyatrī with *Āūṁ̥* prefixed.

6. Those householders who affix *Āūṁ̥* to the Gāyatrī do not get the increase of their families.

7-8. The *turīya-pāda* (fourth foot) of Gāyatrī is the *mantra* ***parorajase sāvadomā prāpat***. (*Bṛhadaranyaka Upaniṣad* v.14.7). "Salutation to Thy beautiful fourth foot which is above the *trilokī* (*rājas*). This cannot obtain that."

The presiding deity of this *mantra* is Brahman. I am now speaking of the full *dhyānam* (meditation) of this Brahman so that the full fruit of the *japam* (recitation) may be obtained. There is a full-blown lotus in the heart; its form is like the Moon, Sun, and the spark of fire; i.e., of the nature of *praṇava* and nothing else. This is the seat of the inconceivable Brahman. Think thus. Now on that seat is seated well the steady constant subtle light, the essence of *akāśa*, the everlasting existence, intelligence and bliss, the Brahman. May He increase my happiness.

Note: *Āūṁ gāyatryasyekapadī dvīpadī, tripadī, chatuspadasi, nahi padyase namaste turyāya darś atāya padāya parorajase, sāvado māprāpat* "O Gāyatrī! Thou art of one foot (in the form of *trilokī*), of two feet (the *trayī vidyā* from Thy second foot) of three feet, all *prāṇa*, etc., are Thy third foot and of four feet (as the Puruṣa). Thou art without foot because Thou art not obtained.

Salutation to Thy beautiful fourth foot which is above the *trilokī* (*rājas*). This cannot obtain that.”

9. Now I am speaking of the *mudrās* of *turīyā*-Gāyatrī: (1) *triśūla* (2) *yoni* (3) *surabhi* (4) *aksamālā* (5) *liṅga* (6) *padma* and (7) *mahāmudrā*. These seven *mudrās* are to be shown.

10-14. What is *sandhyā*, that is Gāyatrī; there is no difference whatsoever between the two. The two are one and the same. Both are of the nature of existence, intelligence and bliss. The Brāhmaṇas would daily worship Her and bow down before Her with greatest devotion and reverence. After the *dhyānam*, first worship Her with five *upachāras* or offerings.

Thus:

Āūm̐ lam prithivyātmane gandham, arpayāmi namo namaḥ.
Āūm̐ ham ākāśātmane puspam arpayāmi namo namaḥ.
Āūm̐ ram Vahnyātmane dīpam arpayāmi namo namaḥ.
Aum vam amritātmane naivedyam arpayāmi namo namaḥ.
Āūm̐ yam ram lam vam ham puspānjalim arpayāmi namo namaḥ.

Thus worshipping with five *upachāras*, you must show *mudrās* to the Devī.

15-16. Then meditate on the form of the Gāyatrī mentally and slowly repeat the Gāyatrī. Do not shake head, neck and while making *japam*, do not show your teeth. According to due rules repeat the Gāyatrī 108 times, or twenty-eight times. When unable, repeat ten times; not less than that.

17-20. Then raise the Gāyatrī placed before on the heart (seat) by the *mantra gāyatrasyai kapadī dvīpadī*, etc., and then bid farewell to Her after bowing down to Her and repeating the *mantra:*

Āūṁ uttame śikhare Devī
bhūmyām parvata mūrdhani
Brāhmaṇa ebhyobhya anujñātā
Gachcha gevī yathāsukham

"On the highest top of the mountain summit in earth (i. e., on the Meru mountain) dwells the goddess Gāyatrī. Being pleased with Thy worshippers go back, O Devī! to Thy abode as it pleaseth Thee."

The wise men never mutter nor recite the Gāyatrī *mantra* within the water, for the Mahārṣis say that the Gāyatrī is fire-faced (*agṇimukhī*). After the farewell show again the following *mudrās: surabhi, jñāna, sūrpa, kūrma, yoni, padma, liṅga* and *nirvāṇa mudrās.*

Then address thus: "O Devī! O Thou who speakest pleasantly to Kaśyapa! O Gāyatrī! Whatever syllables I have missed to utter in making *japam*, whatever vowels and consonants are incorrectly pronounced, I ask Thy pardon for all my above faults."

O Nārada! Next one ought to give peace offerings to Gāyatrī Devī.

21-33. The *chhanda* of Gāyatrī *tarpaṇam* (peace offerings to Gāyatrī) is Gāyatrī; the Ṛṣi is Viśvāmitra; Savitā is the Devatā; its application (*viniyoga*) is in the peace offerings.

Āūṁ bhūhrigvedapuruṣam tarpayāmi.
Āūṁ bhuvah yajurvedapuruṣam tarpayāmi.
Āūṁ svah sāmaveda puruṣam tarpayāmi.
Āūṁ mahāh atharvaveda puruṣam tarpayāmi.
Āūṁ janah itihāsa purāṇa puruṣam tarpayāmi.
Āūṁ tapah sarvāgama puruṣam tarpayāmi.
Āūṁ satyam satyaloka puruṣam tarpayāmi.
Āūṁ bhūh bhūrloka puruṣam tarpayāmi.
Āūṁ bhuvah bhuvoloka puruṣam tarpayāmi.
Āūṁ svah svarloka puruṣam tarpayāmi.
Āūṁ bhūh rekapadām gāyatrīm tarpayāmi.
Āūṁ bhuvo dvītīyapadām gāyatrīm tarpayāmi.
Āūṁ svastripadām gāyatrim tarpayāmi.
Āūṁ bhūrbhūvah svaśchatuspadām gāyatrīm tarpayāmi.

Pronouncing these, offer the *tarpaṇams*. Next add the word *tarpayāmi* to each of the following words: *ūsasīm, gāyatrīm, sāvitrīm, sarasvatim, vedamātaram, prithvīm, ajām, kauśīkīm, sāmkritīm, savajitīm,* etc. and offer *tarpaṇams*. After the *tarpaṇam* is over, offer the peace-chantings, (*śāntivāri*) repeating the following *mantras:*

Āūṁ jāta vedase sunavāma romam, etc.
Āūṁ mānastoka, etc.
Āūṁ tryamvakam yajāmahe, etc.
Āūṁ tachchhamyoh, etc.

Then touch all the parts of your body, repeating the *mantras Āūṁ atodeva*, etc." and reciting the *mantram Svonā Prithivī*, bow down to the earth, after repeating one's name, *gotra*, etc.

34-45. O Nārada! Thus the rules of the morning *sandhyā* are prescribed. Doing works so far, bid farewell to the above-mentioned Gāyatrī. Next finishing the *agṇihotra-homa* sacrifice, worship the five Devatās: Śivā, Śiva, Gaṇeśa, Sūrya and Viṣṇu. Worship by the *puruṣa-sūkta mantra*, or by *hṛīṁ mantra*, or by *vyahriti mantra* or by *śrischate lakṣmīścha*, etc. Place Bhavānī in the center; Viṣṇu in the northeast corner, Śiva in the southeast corner; Gaṇeśa in the southwest corner, and the Sun in the northwest corner, and then worship them. While offering worship with the sixteen offerings, worship by repeating sixteen *mantras*. As there is no other act more merit-giving than the worship of the Devī, so the Devī should first of all be worshipped. Then worship in due order the five Devatās placed in five positions. As the worship of the Devī is the chief object, so in the three *sandhyās*, the worship of the Sandhyā Devī is approved of by the *śrutis*. Never worship Viṣṇu with rice; Gaṇeśa with Tulasī leaves; the Devī Durgā with *darba* grass and Śiva with *ketakī* flower. These flowers are pleasing to the Devī: Mallikā, Jāti, Kutaja, Panasa, Palāsa, Vakula, Lodha, Karavīra, śinśapa, Aparājitā, Bandhūka, Vaka, Madanta, Sindhuvāra, Palāśa, Durbhā, śallakī, Mādhavī, Arka, Mandāra, Ketakī, Karnikāra, Kadamba, Lotus, Campaka, Yūthikā, Tagara, etc.

46-47. Offer incenses *guggul, dhūpa* and the lamp of *til* oil, and finish the worship. Then repeat the principal (male) *mantra* (make *japam*). Thus finishing the work, study the *Vedas* in the second quarter of the next day; and in the third quarter of that day feed father, mother and other dependent relatives with money earned by one's own self according to the traditions of one's family."

Here ends the Seventeenth Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the description of Sandhyā and other daily practices in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVIII—the Greatness of the Devī Pūjā

1. Nārada spoke: "O Bhagavān! I am now very eager to hear the special Pūjā of Śrī Devī. The people get their desires fulfilled if they worship Her."

2-23. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Devaṛṣi! I shall now specially speak to you how the World Mother Bhagavatī is worshipped; by worshipping Whom one easily gets objects of enjoyment, liberation and the destruction of all evils. Controlling one's speech and making *ācamana*, one must make one's *saṅkalpa* and perform *bhūta-śuddhi, mātṛkānyāsa, sadaṅganyāsa,* placing conchshell and doing other necessary acts. Offering the ordinary *arghya*, one should give special *arghya* and with the *mantra* ***astrāya phaṭ*** sprinkle over all the articles brought for worship.

Taking the *guru's* permission, he is to go on with his *pūjā*. First worship the *pītha* or seat whereon the Devī would be placed; then perform *dhyāna* (meditation on the Devī). Then with great devotion, offer to the Devī the seats (*āsana*) and other articles of worship; then perform the bath of the Devī by the water of the *pañchāmṛta* (five nectars).

If anybody performs the bath ceremony of Śrī Devī with one hundred jars of sugarcane juice, he will not have to incur any future birth. He who performs this bath and recites the *Veda mantras*, with mango juice or sugarcane juice gets forever Lakṣmī ever and ever and Sarasvatī bound at

his doors. He who gets this sacred bath of the Devī with grape juice, along with his relatives and acquaintences dwells in the Devī-loka for as many years as there are atoms in the juice. He who bathes the Devī with the *Vedik mantras*, and with water scented with camphor, the fragrant aloe wood (*aguru*), saffron and musk, becomes freed at once of the sins acquired in his hundred births. He who bathes the Devī with jars of milk, lives in the ocean of milk (*ksīra-samudra*) for one *kalpa*. So he who does this bathing ceremony with jars of curd, becomes the lord of *dadhi-kuṇḍa* (the reservoir of curd). He who performs the *snānam* of the Devī with honey, ghee and sugar becomes the lord of these things. He who bathes the Devī with one thousand jars, becomes happy in this world as in the next.

If you give Her a pair of silken clothes, you will go to the Vāyu-Loka. If you give Her the jeweled ornaments, you will become the Lord of gems and jewels. (Make your mind like the gem.) If anybody gives saffron, sandalwood paste, musk, *sindūra* and *ālaktak* (red things), he will go to the heavens and become there the Indra, the Lord of the Devas, in the next birth. Various flowers ought to be offered in Śrī Bhagavatī's worship; or the flowers of the season offered to the Devī will lead the devotee to Kailāśa. The devotee that offers the beautiful *bel* leaves to the Devī never experiences anywhere pains and difficulties. The devotee who writes the *bīja-mantra* of Māyā ***hṛīṁ bhuvaneśvaryai namaḥ*** with red sandalwood paste thrice on the tri-leaves of the *bilva* tree leaf and offers this to the lotus feet of the Devī, becomes Manu by the merit of this virtuous act! The devotee becomes the Lord of the whole universe who worships the Devī Bhagavatī with ten millions of entire *bilva* leaves, fresh, green and spotless.

24-40. If any devotee worships with ten millions of entire fresh green *kuṇḍa* flowers, with eight scents, he gets surely the Prajāpatihood. The worship of the Devī with ten millions of *mallikā* and *mālatī* flowers besmeared with eight scents makes a man the four-faced (Brahmā); and one hundred millions of such flowers will make the devotee a Viṣṇu. In days of yore, Viṣṇu worshipped the Devī in the aforesaid way and so got His Viṣṇuhood. If any devotee worships the Devī with one hundred *kotis* of *mallikā* or *mālatī*

flowers, the man becomes certainly Sutrātmā Hiraṇyagarbha. In ancient days Hiraṇyagarbha worshipped thus the Devī with great devotion and so he became Hiraṇyagarbha! These Hiraṇyagarbha, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa were mere ordinary men before. (See *Brihadāranyaka Upaniṣad*) The eight scents refer to *jatā, mamsī, kapiyutā, śaktergandhās, takam.* So will be the results if *javā, vandhūka* and *dādimī* flowers be offered in the worship. Various other beautiful flowers can be offered duly to the Devī by the devotee. The merits accruing from such offers are not known even to the God Īśvara. The flowers that spring in their proper seasons are to be offered every year to the Devī, repeating Her thousand names enumerated in the Twelfth Skandha or in the *Kūrma Purāṇa*. If the above worship be offered to the Devī, then that man, whether he be a sinner or a great sinner, will be freed from all the sins and after leaving his mortal coil, he will get, no doubt, the lotus feet of the Śrī Devī Bhagavatī. Offer *dhūpa* made of black *aguru*, camphor, sandalwood paste, red sandalwood paste, *sihlaka* and *guggula*, saturated with ghee in such a way as the whole room of Śrī Bhagavatī scents with pure fragrant smell. The Devī Bhagavatī becomes pleased with this and offers the lordship of the three *lokas* to the devotee. The devotee, who offers daily the light of camphor to the Devī, goes to the Sūrya-loka. There is no doubt about this. With one's whole heart, one should give one hundred or one thousand lights to the Devī. The devotee should offer heaps of food consisting of six *rāsas*, the plates and dishes for chewing, sucking, licking and drinking—that is, all kinds of food solid, liquid, and mountain-like high. Always give food on golden flat plates and cups and various delicious sweet juicy nice heavenly fruits, nicely arranged on trays, cups and saucers. When Śrī Mahādevī Bhuvaneśvarī gets pleased, the whole universe gets pleased. For the whole universe is all Devī; as a rope is mistaken for a snake, so this Mahādevī is mistaken for the universe.

41-59. Offer a jar of drinking Ganges water, cool and nice, scented with camphor to the Devī; then offer betels with camphor, cardamum, cloves, and various delicious scents. These all are to be offered with great devotion so that the Devī may be pleased. Next have music with lovely *mṛdaṅgas*, flutes, *murajas*, *dhahkās* and *dundubhis* and so please Her. The *Veda mantras*

are to be recited, the *Purāṇas* are to be read and the hymns to be chanted. With whole head and heart offer to the Devī the umbrella and *chāmara*, the two kingly offerings. Then circumambulate round Her and prostrate before Her, and ask Her kindness and pray to Her to forgive all faults and shortcomings.

The Devī is pleased with anybody who remembers Her even once! What wonder then that She will be pleased with all these offerings! The Mother is naturally merciful to her child. When She is loved with devotion, then She becomes very merciful. There is nothing strange here! On this point I will recite to you the history of Vṛhadratha Rājarsi, hearing which gives rise to *bhakti* and Love.

Once in a certain region in the Himālayas there lived a bird called *chakravāk*. It flew over many countries and went once to Kāśī-dhām. As a fruit of his *prārabdha-karma*, that bird, desirous to find some rice beans, voluntarily went like an orphan round about the temple of Śrī Annapūrnā Devī. There circumambulating round the Devī Bhagavatī the bird left the city Kāśī, that grants liberation and flew away to another country. In time the bird left his body and went to the heavens. There he assumed a heavenly form of a youth and began to enjoy various pleasures. Thus he enjoyed for two *kalpas*. Then he got back to the earth and took his birth as the best in the Kṣatriya family. He became celebrated as the king Vṛhadratha in this world. That King was truthful, controlled his senses, and practiced *śamyama* and deep concentration and knew everything of the past, the present and the future. He conquered all the enemies and performed various sacrifices, became the Emperor of the sea-girt earth and acquired the very rare faculty in the knowledge of everything of his previous births. The Munis came to know of this from various rumors and came to the King. The King Vṛhadratha duly entertained those guests. The Munis took their seats and asked: 'O King! We hear that all the events of previous births are vividly reflected in your memory. On this point great doubts have come upon us. Kindly describe in detail. By what *puñyam* (merits) you have come to know all about previous births and the

knowledge of the past, the present and the future. We have come to you to know how you got this wonderful supersensual knowledge. Kindly say to us sincerely everything about this and oblige.'

60-71. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Brāhmaṇa! The very religious King Vṛhadratha heard them and began to speak out all the secret causes for his knowledge of the past, the present and the future, thus: 'O Munis! Hear how I acquired this knowledge. In my previous birth I was a very low bird *chakravāk*. Once, out of my ignorance, I circumambulated round the temple of the Devī Bhagavatī Annapurnā at Kāśī. And, as the result of that, I lived in the heavens for a period of two *kalpas* and now I have got this birth and I have got the knowledge of the past, the present and the future. O you of good vows! Who can ascertain what amount of merits accrues from remembering the feet of the World-Mother? Remembering Her glories, I always shed tears of joy. Those who do not worship the adorable Deity Jagadambā are great sinners and they are treacherous. Fie on their births! The worship of Śiva or Viṣṇu is not eternal. Only Jagadambā's worship is eternal. Thus it is stated in the *śrutis*. What more shall I speak on this worship of the World-Mother, which is void of the best trace of any doubt. Everyone ought to serve devotedly the lotus feet of the Devī Bhagavatī. There is no other act more glorious in this world than serving the feet of Jagadambā. It is highly necessary to serve the highest Deity, whether in Her *saguṇa* or in Her *nirguṇa* aspect.'

Nārāyaṇa said: "Hearing the aforesaid words of the virtuous Rājarsi Vṛhadratha, the Munis went back to their respective abodes. Such is the power of the Devī Jagadambikā! So who can question about the certainty of the high merits arising from the Jagadambikā's worship and who will not reply, when so questioned? Their births are really fruitful who possess faith in the Devī worship; but of those who have no such faith, there is some wrong mixture, no doubt, in their births."

Here ends the Eighteenth Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the Greatness of the Devī Pūjā, in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIX—the Midday Sandhyā

1-24. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! Now I am speaking of the auspicious midday *sandhyā*, the practice of which leads to the wonderfully excellent results. Listen. Here the *ācamana* and other things are similar to those of the morning *sandhyā*. Only in meditation (*dhyānam*) there is some difference. I will now speak of that. The name of the midday Gāyatrī is Sāvitrī. She is ever a youthful maiden, of white color, three-eyed; She holds in Her one hand a *mālā*, in Her other hand a trident and with Her two other hands She makes signs to Her *bhaktas* to dispel fear and to grant boons. Riding on the bull, She recites the *Yajur-Veda;* She is the Rudra Śakti with *tāmo-guṇa* and She resides in Brahmaloka. She daily traverses the path of the Sun. She is Māyā-Devī, beginningless; I bow down to Her. After meditating on the Ādyā-Devī Bhagavatī perform *ācamana* and other things as in the morning *sandhyā*.

Now, about the offering of *arghya* (an offer of green grass, rice, etc., made in worshipping a God or Brāhmaṇa). Collect flowers for *arghya;* in the absence of flowers, *bael* leaves and water will serve the purpose. Facing the Sun, and looking upwards, offer the *arghya* to the Sun. Then perform other acts as in the morning *sandhyā*. In midday, some offer *arghya* to the Sun, only with the recitation of the Gāyatrī *mantra*. But that is not approved of by the tradition and community; there is the likelihood of the whole work being thwarted or rendered fruitless. For, in the morning and evening *sandhyās*, the Rāksashas named the Mandehās become ready to devour the Sun. This is stated in the *śrutis*. Therefore the midday offering of the *arghya* is not for the destruction of the Daityas but for the satisfaction of the Devī; so with the *mantra ākrisnena*, etc. the offering of *arghya* can be effected; and the reciting of the infallible Gāyatrī *mantra* is only to create disturbance in the shape of thwarting the action. So in the morning and evening, the Brāhmaṇa is to offer the Sūryārghya, repeating the Gāyatrī and *praṇava;* and in the midday to offer flowers and water with the *mantra ākrisnena, rajasā* etc. else it will go against the *śruti*. In the absence of flowers, *darba*

grass, etc., can be offered carefully as the *arghya,* and the full fruits of the *sandhyā* will be secured.

O best of Devarṣis! Now hear the important points in the tarpaṇam (peace offerings). Thus:

Āūṁ bhuvah puruṣam tarpayāmi namo namaḥ.
Āūṁ yajurvedam tarpayāmi namo namaḥ.
Āūṁ maṇḍalam tarpayāmi namo namaḥ.
Āūṁ hiraṇyagarbham tarpayāmi namo namaḥ.
Āūṁ antarātmānam tarpayāmi namo namaḥ
Āūṁ sāvitrīm tarpayāmi namo namaḥ.
Āūṁ devamātaram tarpayāmi namo namaḥ.
Āūṁ sāmkritim tarpayāmi namo namaḥ.
Āūṁ yuvatīm sandhyām tarpayāmi namo namaḥ.
Āūṁ rudrānīm tarpayāmi namo namaḥ.
Āūṁ nīmrijām tarpayāmi namo namaḥ.
Āūṁ bhurbhuvah svah puruṣam tarpayāmi namo namaḥ.

Thus finish the midday *sandhyā tarpaṇam*. Now, with your hands raised high up towards the Sun, worship Him by the two *mantras*, praising thus: *Āūṁ udutyam jātavedasam*, etc., *Āūṁ citram devānām*, etc."

Next repeat the Gāyatrī. Hear its method. In the morning, repeat the Gāyatri at the proper moment with hands raised; in the evening time with hands lowered and in the midday with hands over the breast. Begin with the middle phalanx (joint) of the nameless finger, then the phalanx at its root, then the phalanx at the root of the little finger, its middle phalanx and its top, then the tops of the nameless, fore and ring fingers, then the middle and finally the root of the ring finger (in the direction of the hands of the watch; avoiding the middle and root phalanx of the middle finger). Thus ten times it is repeated. In this way if the Gāyatrī be repeated one thousand times, the sins arising from killing a cow, father, mother, from causing abortions, going to the wife of one's Guru, stealing a Brāhmaṇa's property, a Brāhmaṇa's field, drinking wine, etc., all are destroyed. Also the sins

acquired in three births by mind, word, or by the enjoyments of sensual objects are thereby then and there instantly destroyed. All the labors of him, who works hard in the study of the *Vedas* without knowing the Gāyatrī, are useless. Therefore if you compare on the one hand the study of the four *Vedas* with the reciting of the Gāyatrī, then the Gāyatrī *japam* stands higher. Thus I have spoken to you of the rules of the midday *sandhyā.*"

Here ends the Nineteenth Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the midday Sandhyā in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XX—Description of *Brahma-yajñā*, Sandhyās, etc.

1-25. "Now I am speaking of *brahma-yajñā*. Hear. The twice-born Brāhmaṇa is firstly to sip three times (make *ācamanaa*); then to make the *mārjana* (sprinkle water) twice; he is to touch the water by the right hand and sprinkle water on his two feet. Next, he is to sprinkle with water his head, eyes, nose, ears, heart and head thoroughly. Then speaking out the *deśa* and *kāla* (place and time) he should commence the *brahma-yajñā*. Next for the destruction of all the sins and for getting liberation, he should have the *darbha* sacrificial grass, and the *kuśa* grass, two on his right hand, three on his left hand, one grass each on his seat, sacrificial thread, his tuft, and his heels. No sin can now remain in his body.

'I am performing this *Brahma-yajñā* for the satisfaction of the Devatā according to the *sūtra*,' thus thinking he is to repeat the Gāyatrī thrice. Then he is to recite the following *mantras:*

- *Agṇimīle purohitam, etc.,*
- *Yadamgeti*
- *Agṇirvai*
- *Mahāvratanchaiva panthā*
- *Athātah śamhitāyāścha vidāmaghavat*

- *Mahāvratasya*
- *īsetvorjetvā*
- *Agna āyāhi*
- *śanno Devī rabbīstaye*
- *Tasya Samāmnāyo*
- *Briddairādaich*
- *śiksām pravaksyāmi*
- *Pancha Samvatsareti*
- *Mayarasatajabhetyeva*
- *Gaurgmā*

also he is to recite the two following *Sūtras:*

- *Athāto Dharma Jijñāsā*
- *Athāto Brahma Jijñāsa*

Next he is to recite the *mantras*:

- *Tachhamyoh*
- *Namo Brāhmaṇae namo stvagnaye Namaḥ*
- *prithivyai nama Osadhībhyoh Namaḥ*

(These are the famous *mantras* of the *Ṛg-Veda*).

Next perform the Deva-tarpaṇam, thus:

Āūm̐ prajāpatis tripyatu
Āūm̐ Brahmas tripyatu
Āūm̐ Vedās tripyantu
Āūm̐ Risayas tripyantu
Āūm̐ Devās tripantu
Āūm̐ Sarvani chhandāmsi tripyantu
Āūm̐ Āūm̐ Kāras tripyatu

Āūṁ Vasat Kāra stripyatu
Āūṁ Vyārhitayas tripyantu
Āūṁ Sāvitrī tripyatu
Āūṁ Gāyatrī tripyatu
Āūṁ Yajñās tripyantu
Āūṁ Dyāvā prithivyau tripyatām
Āūṁ antarīksam tripyatu
Āūṁ Ahorātrāni tripyantu
Āūṁ Sāmkkyā stripyantu
Āūṁ Siddhā stripyantu
Āūṁ Samudrā stripyantu
Āūṁ Nadyās tripyantu
Āūṁ girayas tripyantu
Āūṁ Kṣetraus adhivana spati gandharvā Psarasas tripyantu
Āūṁ nāgā vayāmsi gāvascha sādhyā viprāsta thaiva cha, yaksā raksānsi bhutanī tyeva mantāni tripyantu.

Next, suspending the sacrificial thread from the neck, perform the Ṛṣi tarpaṇam, thus:

Āūṁ śatarchinas tripyantu
Āūṁ mādhyamās tripyantu
Āūṁ Gritsamadastripyatu
Āūṁ Viśvāmitras tripyantu
Āūṁ Vāmadevas tripyantu
Āūṁ Atris tripyatu
Āūṁ Bharadvājas tripyatu
Āūṁ Vasiṣṭhas tripyatu
Āūṁ Pragāthas tripyatu
Āūṁ Pāvamānyas tripyantu

Next, holding the sacrificial thread over the right shoulder and under the left arm, perform the *tarpaṇam*, thus:

Āūṁ Ksudrasūktās tripyantu
Āūṁ Mahāsūktās tripyantu
Āūṁ Sanakas tripyatu
Āūṁ Sanandas tripyatu
Āūṁ Sanātanas tripyatu
Āūṁ Sanat Kumāras tripyatu
Āūṁ Kapilas tripyatu
Āūṁ āsuris tripyatu
Āūṁ Vohalis tripyatu
Āūṁ Pañchaśikhas tripyatu
Āūṁ Sumantu Jaimini Vaiśampāyana Paila Sūtra Bhāsya bhārata Mahā Bhārata Dharmāchāryahs tripyantu
Āūṁ Jānantīvāha vigārgya Gautama śākalya vābhravya Māndavya Māndūkeyā stripyantu
Āūṁ Gārgī Vāchaknavī tripyatu
Āūṁ Vadavā prātitheyī tripyatu
Āūṁ Sulabhā maitreyī tripyatu
Āūṁ Kaholas tripyatu
Āūṁ Kausītakas tripyatu
Āūṁ Mahā Kausitakas tripyatu
Āūṁ Bhāradvājas tripyatu
Āūṁ Paimgas tripyatu
Āūṁ Mahāpaimgas tripyatu
Āūṁ Sujajñās tripyatu
Āūṁ Sāmkhyāyanas tripyatu
Āūṁ Aitareyas tripyatu
Āūṁ Mahāitareyas tripyatu
Āūṁ Vāskalas tripyatu
Āūṁ Sākalas tripyatu
Āūṁ Sujāta vaktras tripyatu
Āūṁ Audavāhis tripyatu
Āūṁ Saujāmis tripyatu

Āūṁ śaunakas tripyatu
Āūṁ āśvalāyanas tripyatu

26-54. Let all the other *āchāryas* be satisfied:

Āūṁ Ye Ke chāsmat kule Jātā aputrā gotrino mritāh
te grihnantu mayā dattam vastranispīdi to dakam

Saying thus offer water squeezed out of a cloth.

O Nārada! Thus I have spoken to you of the rules of *brahma-yajñā*. Whoever performs thus the *brahma-yajñā* gets the fruits of studying all the *Vedas*. Then performing, in due order, the Vaiśvadeva, *homa, śrāddha*, serving the guests and feeding the cows, the devotee is to take his meals during the fifth part of the day along with the other Brāhmaṇas. Then the sixth and the seventh parts of the day he is to spend in reading histories and the *Purāṇas*. Then the eighth part of the day he is to devote in seeing the relatives, talking with them and receiving visits from other persons; then he will be prepared to perform the evening *sandhyā*.

O Nārada! I am now talking of the evening *sandhyā*. Listen. Śrī Bhagavatī is pleased very quickly with him who performs the evening *sandhyā*. First make the *ācamana* and make the *vāyu* (air) in the body steady. With heart tranquil and with the seat *baddha-padmāsana*, be calm and quiet while engaged in performing the *sandhyā*. At the commencement of all actions prescribed in the *śrutis* and *smṛtis*, first perform the *sagarbha-prānāyama*. In other words recite the *mantra* mentally for the due number of moments and make the *prānāyama*. Simply meditating is called *agarbha-prānāyama*. Here no *mantra* is necessary to be recited. Then have the *bhuta-śuddhi* (purification of the elements) and make the *saṅkalpa*. First of all, the purification of elements, etc., are to be done first; then one becomes entitled to do other actions. While doing *pūraka* (inhaling), *kumbhaka* (retaining) and *rechaka* (exhaling) in *pranāyāma*, meditate on the Deity stated duly. In the evening time meditate on the Bhagavatī Sandhyā Devī thus:

> The name of the Gāyatrī Devī is Sarasvatī. She is old, of black color, wearing ordinary clothes; in her hands are seen conch shell, disc, club and lotus. On Her feet the anklets are making sweet tinkling sounds; on Her loins there is the golden thread; decked with various ornaments. She is sitting on Garuḍa. On Her head the invaluable jewel crown is seen; on Her neck, the necklaces of stars; Her forehead is shining with a brilliant luster emitting from the pearl and jewel *tātamka* ornaments. She has put on yellow clothes; Her nature is eternal knowledge and ever-bliss. She is uttering *Sāma-Veda*. She resides in the heavens and daily She goes in the path of the Sun. I invoke the Devī from the solar orb.

O Nārada! Meditate on the Devī thus and perform the *sandhyā*. Then perform the *mārjanam* by the *mantra āpohisthā* and next by the *mantra Agṇiścha mā manyuścha*. The remaining actions are the same as before. Next, repeat the Gāyatrī and offer, with a pure heart, the offering of *arghya* to the Sun for the satisfaction of Nārāyaṇa. While offering this *arghya*, keep the two legs level and similar, and take water in folded palms and meditating on the Devatā within the solar orb, throw it towards Him. The fool that offers Sūryārghya in the water, out of ignorance, disregarding the injunctions of the *śrutis*, will have to perform *prāyaścitta* for that sin. Next, worship the Sun by the Sūrya-*mantra*. Then taking one's seat, meditate on the Devī and repeat the Gāyatrī. One thousand times or five hundred times the Gāyatrī is to be repeated. The worship, etc., in the evening is the same as in the morning. Now I am speaking of the *tarpaṇam* in the Evening Sandhyā. Hear. Vasiṣṭha is the Ṛṣi of the aforesaid Sarasvatī. Viṣṇu in the form of Sarasvatī is the Devatā; Gāyatrī is the *chhanda;* its application is in the evening *sandhyā tarpaṇam*. Now the *tarpaṇam* of the *sandhyānga* (the adjunct of *sandhyā*) runs as follows:

Āūṁ Svah Puruṣam Tarpayāmi
Āūṁ Sāmavedam Tarpayāmi
Āūṁ Sūryamaṇḍalam tarpayāmi
Āūṁ Hiraṇyagarbham tarpayāmi

Āūm̐ Paramātmānam tarpayāmi
Āūm̐ Sarasvatīm tarpayāmi
Āūm̐ Devamātaram tarpayāmi
Āūm̐ Samkritim tarpayāmi
Āūm̐ Vriddhām Sandhyām tarpayāmi
Āūm̐ Viṣṇu rūpinīm Usasīm tarpayāmi
Āūm̐ Nirmrijīm tarpayāmi
Āūm̐ Sarvasiddhi kārinīm tarpayāmi
Āūm̐ Sarvamantrā dhipatikām tarpayami
Āūm̐ Bhurbhuvah Svah Puruṣam tarpayāmi

Thus perform the Vaidik *tarpaṇam*. O Nārada! Thus have been described the rules of the sin-destroying evening *sandhyā*. By this evening *sandhyā*, all sorts of pains and afflictions and diseases are removed. And ultimately *mokṣa* is obtained. What more than this that you should know this *sandhyā-vandanam* as the principal thing amongst good conduct and right ways of living. Therefore Śrī Bhagavatī fructifies all the desires of the *bhaktas* who perform this *sandhyā-vandanā*."

Here ends the Twentieth Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the description of Brahma-yajñā, Sandhyās, etc., in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXI—Gāyatrī *Puraścharanam*

1-55. Nārāyaṇa said: "Now I shall speak of the Gāyatrī-*puraścharanam*. Hear. *Puraścharanam* means repetition of the name of a Deity or of a *mantra* attended with burnt offerings, oblations, etc. By its performance all desires are obtained and all sins are destroyed. On the tops of mountains, on the banks of the rivers, on the roots of *bel* trees, on the edges of tanks, within the cow-stalls, in temples, on the root of *aśvattha* trees, in gardens, in Tulasī groves, in the *puñya-kṣetrams* (holy places), before one's *guru*, or wherever the mind feels exalted and cheerful, and gets strength, performing the *puraścharanam* leads to speedy success. Before commencing the

puraścharanam of a *mantra,* first *prāyaścitta* (penance) is done in the shape of repeating one million times the Gāyatrī with the *vyāhṛtis*. In any Vaidik *karma* or in making *puraścharanam* of the *mantra* of the Devatās Nṛṣiṁha, Sūrya, Varāha, etc., the first thing done is to repeat the Gāyatrī. Without the *japam* of Gāyatrī, no action is attended with success. The reason is this: Every Brāhmaṇa is a *śākta* (a follower of Śakti); he cannot be a Vaiṣṇava or Śaiva; for he is the worshipper of the prime force, Vedamātā Gāyatrī. Therefore obtain first the Grace of one's own *īṣṭa-devatā,* Gāyatrī, by Her *japam*. Then worship the other Deities.

Thus one should purify one's *jāpya-mantra* (the *mantra* that is to be repeated) by first repeating one million times the Gāyatrī; then one is to commence *puraścharanam*. Again before purifying the *mantra*, one is to purify one's *ātman* (Self). In this purification of one's *ātman* Gāyatrī is to be repeated three *lakh* times; in case of inability, one *lakh* times. Without purification of one's *ātman*, *japam, homa* and other actions all become useless. This is specially noted in the *Vedas*. By *tapas*—*japam, chāndrāyana* and *vrata* (asceticism) mortify your body. By offering *tarpaṇam* (peace-offerings) to the Fathers and the Devas, one can get self-purification.

If you want to get the heavens and if you want to become great, practice *tapasyā*. There is no other way. *Tapasyā* is the intentional calling of the Mother, that call which penetrates through and through the *brahmāṇḍa*. The Kṣatriyas should cross difficulties and dangers by force of arms; the Vaiśyas, by wealth; the Śūdras, by serving the twice-born; and the Brāhmaṇas should cross difficulties and dangers by *tapasyā, homa, japam*, etc. So the Brāhmaṇas should always be cheerful and in prompt readiness to do *tapasyā*. Of all sorts of *tapasyā*, mortifying the body by observing vows and fastings is the best. So say the Ṛṣis. This mortification of the body gives self-reliance and self-intuition more surely and speedily than all the other studies and practices. The Brāhmaṇas should purify themselves by following duly *krichhra chāndrāyana vratas*, etc.

O Nārada! Now I am speaking of the purification of food. Hear. The following four occupations of the Brāhmaṇas are the best: *ayācita*, (without

begging or asking for anything), *unchha*, (the gathering in of handfuls of the corn left by the reapers), *śukla* (the maintenance derived by a Brāhmaṇa from other Brāhmaṇas; a pure mode of life), and *bhikṣū* (begging). Whether according to the *Tantras* or according to the *Vedas*, the food obtained by the above four means is pure. What is earned by *bhikṣā* (begging) is divided into four parts: one part is given to the Brāhmaṇas; the second part is given to the cows; the third part is given to the guests, the fourth part is to be taken by him and his wife. Whatever is fixed for taking (swallowing) mouthfuls of food, that is to be taken on a tray or a platter. First throw a little cow-urine over that and count duly the number of mouthfuls. The mouthfuls are to be of the size of an egg; the householders are to take eight such mouthfuls and the *vānaprasthīs* are to take four such mouthfuls. The *brahmachārins* can sprinkle their food with cow-urine nine times, six times, or three times as they like; while sprinkling, the fingers are to remain intact. The Gāyatrī is to be repeated also. The food offered by a thief, Caṇḍāla, Kṣatriya or Vaiśya is very inferior. The food of a Śūdra, or the companion with a Śūdra or taking food in the same line with a Śūdra leads one to suffer in the terrible hells as long as there are the Sun and Moon.

The *puraścharanam* of Gāyatrī is repeating this twenty-four *lakh* times—as many *lakh* times as there are syllables in the Gāyatrī. But according to Viśvāmitra, repeating thirty-two *lakh* times is the *puraścharanam* of Gāyatrī. As the body becomes useless when the soul leaves the body, so the *mantra* without *puraścharanam* is useless. *Puraścharanam* is prohibited in the months of Jyaiṣṭha, Āsādha, Pausa and Mala (dirty) months. Also on Tuesday, Saturday; in the Vyatīpāta and Vaidhriti-*yogas;* also in Aṣṭamī (eighth), Navamī (ninth), Śāsthī (sixth), Chaturthī (fourth) Trayodaśī (thirteenth), Chaturdasī (fourteenth) and Amāvāsyā (New Moon) *tithis* (lunar days); in the evening twilight and in the night; while the *nakṣatra* Bharanī, Krittikā, Ārdrā, Aśleṣā, Jyesthā, Dhanisthā, Śravanā or the Janma *nakṣatra* (Birth time star) is with the Moon; while the signs Mesa, Karkata, Tulā, Kumbha, and Makara are the *lagna* (the ascendant). When the Moon and the stars are auspicious, especially in the bright fortnight, performing *puraścharanam* gives *mantra-siddhi*.

First of all repeat *svasti-vāchan*, perform duly the *nāndi-mukha-śraddha* and give food and clothing to the Brāhmaṇas. Take the permission of the Brāhmaṇas and begin the *puraścharanam*. Where the Śiva-liṅgam exists, facing west, or in any Śiva temple, commence repeating the *mantra*. The other Śiva-kṣetrams are Kāśī, Kedāra, Mahā Kāla, Śrī Kṣetra, and Tryamvakam. These five are the great *kṣetrams*, known widely on this earth, for the fructification and the *siddhis* of the *mantras*. At all other places than these, the *karma-chakra* is to be drawn according to the principles of the *Tantra*. And then they will be fit for *puraścharanam*. The number of times that the *puraścharanam* (repeating the mantra) is done on the first day, the same number is to be continued every day until completion; not greater nor less than that, and also no intermission or stoppage should occur in the interval.

Repeating the *mantra* is to be commenced in the morning and should be done up to midday. While doing this, the mind is to be kept free from other subjects, and it is to be kept pure; one is to meditate on one's own Deity and on the meaning of the *mantra,* and one should be particularly careful that no inaccuracies nor omissions should occur in the Gāyatrī, *chhandas* and in the repetition of the *mantra*. One tenth of the total number of *puraścharanams* that are repeated is to be used for the *homa*. The *charu* is to be prepared with ghee, *til*, *bel* leaves, flowers, *jaya* grain, honey and sugar; all mixed, are to be offered as oblations to the fire in the *homa*. Then the success in the *mantra* comes (i.e., *mantra-siddhi* is obtained or the *mantra* becomes maṇifested).

After the *puraścharanam* one should do properly the daily and occasional duties and worship the Gāyatrī that brings in *dharma*, wealth, objects of desire and liberation. There is nothing superior an object of worship to this Gāyatrī, whether in this world or in the next. The devotee engaged in the *puraścharanam* should eat moderately, observe silence, bathe thrice in the three *sandhyā* times, should be engaged in worshipping his Deity, should not he unmindful and should not do any other work. He is to remain, while in water, to repeat the Gāyatrī three *lakhs* of times.

In case the devotee repeats the *mantra* for achieving success in any other desired work (*kāmya-karma*), then he should willingly stick to it until the desired success is attained. Now is being told how to get success in ordinary *kāmya-karmas*. When the sun is rising, repeat the *purascharanam mantra* daily thousand times. Then one's life will be lengthened, no disease will occur, and wealth and prosperity will be obtained. If it be done this way, success is surely attained within three months, six months or at the end of one year. If the *homa* (offering oblations to the fire) be offered one *lakh* times with lotuses besmeared with *ghee* (clarified butter), *mokṣa* (liberation) is attained. If before the *mantra-siddhi*, success in realising the *mantra*, is attained, one performs *japam* or *homam* for *kāmya-siddhi* (to get certain desires) or *mokṣa*, then all his actions become useless. If anybody performs twenty-five *lakh homas* by curd and milk, he gets success (*siddhi*) in this very birth. So all the Mahārṣis say. By this the same result is attained that is got by the aforesaid means, i.e., by the eight-limbed *yoga*, whereby the *yogīs* become perfect.

He will attain *siddhi* if he be devoted to his *guru* and keep himself under restraint for six months only (i.e., practice *samyama*) as regards taking food, etc., whether he be incapable or his mind be attached to other sensual objects. One should drink *pañcha-gavya* (cow urine, cow-dung, milk, curd, ghee) one day, fast one day, take Brāhmaṇa's food one day and be mindful in repeating the Gāyatrī. First bathe in the Ganges or in other sacred places and while in water repeat one hundred Gāyatrīs. If one drinks water on which one hundred Gāyatrīs are repeated, one is freed from all one's sins. He gets the fruit of performing the *krichhra-vrata*, the *chāndrāyana-vrata* and others. Be he a Kṣatriya king or a Brāhmaṇa, if he is to remain in his own house, hold *āśrama* and be engaged in performing *tapasyā*, then he will be certainly freed of all his sins. Be he a householder or a *brahmachārī* or *vānaprasthī*, he should perform sacrifices, etc., according to his *adhikāra* (or his rights) and he will get fruits according to his desires. The *sāgnik* man (who keeps the holy fire) and other persons of good conduct and of learning and of good education should perform actions as prescribed in the *Vedas* and *Smṛtis* with a desire to attain *mokṣa*. Thus one should eat fruits

and vegetables and water, or take eight mouthfuls of *bhiksānna* (the food got by begging). If the *puraścharanam* be performed this way, then the *mantra-siddhi* is obtained. O Nārada ! If the Puraścharanam be done with the *mantra* thus, his poverty is removed entirely. What more shall I say than this, that if anybody simply hears this, his merits get increased and he attains great success."

Here ends the Twenty First Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on Gāyatrī Puraścharanam in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXII—the Rules of Vaiśvadeva

1-45. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! In connection with this *puraścharanam* it comes now to my memory about the rules concerning the Vaiśvadeva worship—an offering made to the Viśvadevās; an offering to all Deities made by presenting oblations to fire before meals. Hear. The five *yajñās* are the following: (1) The Devayajñā, (2) Brahma-yajñā, (3) Bhūta-yajñā, (4) Pitṛ-yajñā, and (5) Manusya-yajñā. *Agni-kuṇḍa*, the pair of stone pestles, brooms (for sweeping, etc.), sieves and other household things of the sort, wooden mortars (used for cleansing grains from husk) and waterjars, these five are the sources of evils inasmuch as they are the means of killing. So to free one's self from the above sins, one is to sacrifice before the Vaiśvadeva. Never offer oblations of Vaiśvadeva on hearths, on any iron vessel, on the ground or on broken tiles. They are to be offered in any sacrificial pit (*kuṇḍa*) or on any sacrificial altar. Do not fire the hearth by fanning with hands, with winnowing baskets, or with holy deer skin, etc., but you can do so by blowing by your mouth. For the mouth is the origin of fire. If the fire be ignited by clothes, one is liable to get disease; if by winnowing baskets, then less of wealth comes; if by hands, one's death ensues. But if it be done by blowing, then one's success comes.

One should sacrifice with curd, ghee, fruits, roots and vegetables, and water and in their absence with fuel, grass, etc., or with any other

substances soaked with ghee, curd, *pāyasa* or lastly with water. But never with oil or with salty substances. If one performs the *homa* with dry or stale substances, one is attacked with leprosy; if anybody performs *homa* with leavings of other food he becomes subdued by his enemy; if one does so with rude and harsh substances, he becomes poor and if one does with salty substances, he meets with a downward course, gets degraded in position and honor.

Offer oblations to Vaiśvadeva with burning coals and ashes from the north side of the fire of the hearth after the preparation of the meals. But you should never offer sacrifices with salty things. The illiterate Brāhmaṇa who eats before offering oblations to Vaiśvadeva goes headlong downwards into the Kāla Sūtra hell. Whatever food that you are intending to prepare, whether they be vegetables, leaves, roots or fruits, offer oblations to Vaiśvadeva with that. If before the *homa* be performed of Vaiśvadeva, any *brahmachārī* comes, then first take off something for the *homa*, and then give to the beggar and satisfy him and tell him to be off. For the *brahmāchārī* mendicant can remove any defects that may occur to Vaiśvadeva, but Vaiśvadeva is unable to remove any defects that may occur regarding the mendicant *brahmachārī*. Both the *paramahānsa* or *brahmachārī* mendicant are the masters of the prepared food (*pakkānna*); so when anybody takes one's food without giving to any of these two, if they happen to come there, he will have to make the *chāndrāyana* (religious or expiatory penance regulated by the moon's age, that is, waxing or waning).

O Nārada! After the offering given to Vaiśvanara, one is to offer *gogrāsa*: mouthfuls of food to the cows. Hear now how that is done. The mother Surabhi, beloved of Viṣṇu, is always stationed in the region of Viṣṇu (Viṣṇupada); so pray 'O Surabhi! I am offering you mouthfuls of food. Accept it. Salutation to the cows,' saying this, one is to worship the cows and offer food to them. Hereby Surabhi, the Mother of the cows, becomes pleased. After this, one is to wait outside for a period that is taken to milch a cow, whether any guests are coming. For if any guest goes back disappointed from any house without any food; he takes away all the

puñyams (merits) of the householder and gives him back his own sin. The householder is to support mother, father, *guru*, brother, son, servants, dependants, guests, those that have come, and Agṇi (fire). Knowing all these, he who does not perform the functions of the household is reckoned as fallen from his *dharma,* both in this world and in the next. The poor householder gets the same fruit by performing these five *mahā-yajñās* that a rich Brāhmaṇa gets by performing the Soma Yajñā.

O best of the Munis! Now I am talking of the Prānāgni Hotra or about taking food, knowing the rules of which makes a man free from birth, old age and death and from all sorts of sins. He who takes his food according to proper rules, is freed of the threefold debts, delivers twenty-one generations of ancestors from hell, obtains the fruits of all the *yajñās* and goes unhampered to all the regions of the righteous. Think of the belly as *arani* or a piece of wood for kindling the fire, think of the mind as the churning rod, and think of the wind as the rope, and then kindle the fire residing in the belly; the eyes are to be considered as the sacrificer, (*addharyu*), and consider fire in the belly as the result of churning. In this fire of the belly, one is to offer oblations for the satisfaction of *prāṇa*, etc., the five deities. First of all offer oblations to the *prāṇa-vāyu* with food taken by the forefinger, middlefinger and thumb; next offer oblations to the *apāna-vāyu* with the thumb, middle finger and the nameless (*anāmā*) finger; next offer oblations to the *vyāna-vāyu* (breath) with the thumb, nameless finger and the little finger; next offer oblations to the *udāna-vāyu* with the thumb, forefinger and the little finger and lastly offer oblations to the *samāna-vāyu* with food taken by all the fingers. At the same time repeat respectively the *mantras:*

Āūm̐ Prānāya Svāhā
Āūm̐ Apānāya Svāhā
Āūm̐ Samānāya Svāhā
Āūm̐ Udānāya Svāhā
Āūm̐ Vyānāya Svāhā

Within the mouth, there is the *āhavanīya* fire; within the heart, there is the *gārhapatya* fire; in the navel, there is the *dhaksināgni* fire; below the navel, there is the *sabhyāgni* fire and below that there is the *āvasathyāgni* fire. Think thus.

Next consider speech as the *hotā*, the *prāṇa* as the *udgāthā*, the eyes as the *addharyu*, the mind as Brahman, the ears as the *hotā* and the keeper of the *agṇi*, the *ahaṅkāra* (egotism) as a beast (*paśu*), Āūṁ Kāra as water, *buddhi* (intellect) of the householder as the legal wife, the heart as the sacrificial altar, the hairs and pores as the *kuśa* grass, and the two hands as the sacrificial ladles and spoons (*śruk* and *śruva*). Then think of the color of the *prāṇa-mantra* as golden, the fire of hunger as the Ṛṣi (seer), Sūrya (the sun) as Devatā, the *chhandas* as Gāyatrī and *prānāya* Svāhā as the *mantra* uttered; also repeat *idam ādityadevāya namaḥ* and offer oblations to the *prāṇa*. The color of the *apāna-mantra* is milk white; *śraddhāgni* is the Ṛṣi, the Moon is the Devatā, Usnik is the *chhanda*, and *apānāya svāhā*, and *idam somāya na namaḥ* are the *mantras*. The color of the *vyāna-mantra* is red like red lotuses; the fire Deity Hutāsana is the Ṛṣi, the fire is the Devatā; *anustup* is the *chhanda*, *vyānāya svāhā* and *idam agnaye na namaḥ* are the *mantras*. The color of the *udāna-mantra* is like that of the worm Indra Gopa; fire is the Ṛṣi; Vāyu is the Devatā, Brihatī is the *chhanda*; *udānāya svāhā* and *idam vāyave na namaḥ* are the *mantras*. The color of the *samāna-mantra* is like lightning; Agṇi is the Ṛṣi; *parjanya* (the rains, water) is the Devatā; Pankti is the *chhanda; samānāya svāhā* and *idam parjanyāya na namaḥ* are the *mantras*. O Nārada! Thus offering the five oblations to the five breaths, next offer oblations to the *ātman*; the Bhīsana Vahni is the Ṛṣi; the Gāyatrī is the *chhanda*; the Self is the Devatā; *ātmane svāhā* and *idam ātmane na namaḥ* are the *mantras*.

O Nārada! He who knows this *homa* of *prānāgnihotra* attains the state of Brahman. Thus I have spoken to you in brief the rules of the Prānāgnihotra *homa*."

Here ends the Twenty-Second Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the rules of Vaiśvadeva in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIII—the *Tapta-kṛchchhra-vrata* and others

1-20. Nārāyaṇa said: "The best Sādhaka, then uttering after his meals, the mantra *amṛtāpidhānamasi:* "O water-nectar! Let Thou be the covering of the food that I have taken," should make *ācamana* (sip one *gandusa* of water) and distribute the remnants (the leavings) to those who take the leavings. "Let the servants and maidservants of our family that expect the leavings of food be satisfied with what leavings I give to them. Let those inhabitants of the Raurava hell or other unholy places who have remained there for a *padma* or *arbuda* years and want to drink water, be satisfied with this water that I offer to them, and let this water bring unending happiness to them." Repeating the above two *mantras,* let the householder distribute the leavings of food to the servants and the water to those who want water respectively. Then opening the knot of the *pavitra* (a ring of *kuśa* grass worn on the fourth finger on certain religious occasions), let him throw this on the square *maṇḍalam* or on the ground. The Brāhmaṇa that throws this *kuśa* grass on the vessel (*pātra*) is said to defile the vow of Brāhmaṇas taking their food. The Brāhmaṇa that has not yet washed his face after taking the food, or touching another such Brāhmaṇa or a dog, or a Śūdra, should fast one day and then drink *pañcha-gavya* and thus purify himself. And in case the *ucchchista* Brāhmaṇa who has not washed his mouth and hands after meals be touched by another Brāhmaṇa, who is not *uchchista*, then simply bathing will purify him. By offering this *ekāhuti* (one oblation) according to the rules mentioned above, one obtains the fruit of performing ten million sacrifices; and by offering this oblation five times one gets the endless fruit of performing fifty million sacrifices, and if one feeds such a man who knows well how to do this *prānāgnihoma*, then he as well as he whom he feeds both derive full benefits and they ultimately go to heaven. The Brāhmaṇa acquires while taking each of his mouthful of food the fruit of eating *pañcha-gavya*, who takes his food duly with the holy *pavitra-kuśa* grass tied on his finger. During the three times of worship, the devotee is to do his daily *japam, tarpaṇam* and *homa* and he should feed the Brāhmaṇas. Thus the five-limbed *puraścharana* is completely done. The religious man should sleep on a low bedding (lie on the ground); he is to control his

senses and anger; he is to eat moderately, the things that are light, sweet and good; he is to be humble, peaceful and calm. He is to bathe thrice daily and not to hold any unholy conversation with any woman, a Śūdra, one who is fallen, without any initiation, and who is an atheist; as well he should not speak in a language spoken by the *caṇḍālas*. One is to bow down before him who is in the act of performing the *japam, homa* and worship, etc; one is not to talk with him. Never by deed, mind or word, on all occasions never speak about sexual intercourse, nor hold any contact with such people. For the relinquishment of this subject is called *brahmacharyam* (continence) of the kings as well as of the householders. But one should go to one's legal wife during the night time after her menstruation duly according to the rules of the *śāstras;* the *brahmacharyam* is not thereby destroyed. Man cannot repay the three-fold debts and he cannot aspire for *mokṣa* without procreating sons or without doing the duties of the householders as prescribed by the *śāstras*. An attempt to do so becomes entirely fruitless, like the nipples on the neck of a goat. Rather it drags one downward. So the *śrutis* say. So let yourself be free first from the debts due to the Devas, the debts due to the Ṛṣis and the debts due to the Pitṛs. Make sacrifices first and then be free from the Devas' debt. Keep *brahmacharyam* and be free from the Ṛṣis' debt. Offer *til* and water; that is, do *śrāddhas* and *tarpaṇams* and be free from the debt due to the Pitṛs. Then do readily practice your own *varṇaśrama-dharma*.

21-33. One is to practice *krichchra chāndrāyana vrata* and to take for his food milk, fruits, roots and vegetables, *havisyannam* and food obtained by begging, so that one may become sinless. One is to make *japam* for *puraścharanam*. One is to avoid salt, salty or alkaline substances, acid, garlic, turnips, eating in *kāmsa* vessels, chewing betels, eating twice, putting on impure clothing, intoxicating things and the *unśāstrik* nocturnal *japam;* also one is not to waste one's time over blaming and trying to find faults with the relatives, playing at dice, or talking at random with one's wife (so that evil effects may arise). One is to spend one's time in worshipping the Devas, reciting the hymns of praise, and studying the *śāstras*. One is to sleep on the ground, practice *brahmacharyam* and the vow of silence, bathe

thrice, not practice anything which befits the Śūdras only. One is to worship every day, make charities duly and be always happy, recite *stotras* daily, do occasional Deva worships, have faith in one's *guru* and Deva. These twelve rules are to ensure success to the devotee who does *puraścharanam*. One is to daily praise the Sun with one's face turned towards Him, do *japam* before Him; or one is to worship one's own Deity in front of fire or the image of any god, and do *japam* simultaneously. The devotee who practices *puraścharanam* is to bathe, worship, do *japam*, meditate, practice *homa, tarpaṇam*, is to have no desires and to surrender all fruits to one's own desired Deity, etc. These are necessarily to be observed by him. Therefore while doing *japam, homa*, etc., the devotee's mind is to remain always pleasant and satisfied.

One should be ready to practice *tapasyā*, to see the *śāstras* and be merciful to all the beings. As asceticism leads one to to heaven and to the attainment of one's desires, therefore know this that all the powers come to an ascetic. An ascetic can cause another's death (*māran*); he can injure others, cure diseases and kill all. Whatever the several Ṛṣis wanted from the Devī Gāyatrī, and to that end made *puraścharanam* and worshipped Her, they obtained from Her all those things.

O Nārada! I will speak of *śānti-karmas* etc., in a future chapter. Here I will speak of those rules, etc., that are to be observed in *puraścharanam,* inasmuch as they play the principal part to success.

First of all shave yourself and have your hair and nails, etc. cut, bathe and be pure. Then perform the *prājāpatya-prāyaścitta* for one's peace and purification, and next do the *puraścharanam* of the Gāyatrī. Do not speak the whole day and night. Keep your thoughts pure. If words are to be spoken, speak only what you take as true. First recite *mahāvyāhṛti* and then the Sāvitrī *mantra* with *praṇava* prefixed. Then recite the sin-destroying *mantra āpohisthā* etc., *Svasti-matī Sūkta* and *Pāvamānī Sūkta*. In every action, in its beginning and at its end one is to understand the necessity of doing the *japam*, why and what for one is doing that.

One is to repeat the *praṇava*, the three *vyāhṛtis* and *sāvitrī ayuta* times, or one thousand times or one hundred times or ten times. Then offer with water, the peace offerings (*tarpaṇam*) to the *āchārya*, Ṛṣi, *chhandas* and the Devas. Being engaged in action, do not speak any impure language of the Mlechchhas or talk with any Śūdra or any bad person. Do not talk with wife in the period of menstruation, with one who has fallen, with a low-class person, with any hater of the Devas and the Brāhmaṇas, *āchāryas* and *gurus*, with those who blame the fathers and mothers; nor show any disrespect to anybody. Thus I have spoken in due order about all the rules of *kṛchchhra-vrata*. Now I will speak of the rules of the *prājāpatya-kṛchchhra, śāntapana, parāka-kṛchchhra* and *chāndrāyana*.

34-54. One becomes freed of all the sins if one performs the above five *chāndrāyanas*. By the performance of the *tapta-kṛchchhra*, all sins are burnt off in an instant. By the performance of the three *chāndrāyanas* the people get purified and go to the Brahmaloka. By doing eight *chāndrāyanas*, one sees face-to-face one's Devatā, ready to grant boons. With ten *chāndrāyanas*, one gets the knowledge of the *Vedas* and one acquires all what one wants.

In the observance of the *kṛchchhra-prājāpatya vrata*, one has to take food once in midday for three days, once in the evening for three days, and for the next three days whatever one gets without asking anything from anybody. For the next three days one is not to take anything at all and go on with one's work. These twelve dayś work constitutes the *prājāpatya-vrata*.

Now about the rules of the *śāntapana-vrata*. On the preceding day one has got to eat food consisting of the mixture of cow urine, cow-dung, milk, curd, ghee and the water of *kuśa* grass; the day following he is to fast. These two days' work constitutes the *śāntapana-vrata*.

Now about the *ati-kṛchchhra vrata*. For the first three days, one is to eat one mouthful of food a day and for the next three days one is to fast. This is the *ati-kṛchchhra vrata*. This *vrata* repeated three times is called *mahā-śāntapana vrata*. Note: According to the opinion of Yama, the fifteen days' work constitutes *mahā-śāntapana*. For the three days one has to eat cow urine; for

the next three days, cow-dung, for the next three days, curd; for the next three days milk; and for the next three days one has to take ghee. Then one becomes pure. This is called the all sin-destroying *mahā-śāntapan vrata*. Now I am speaking of the nature of the *tapta-kṛchchhra vrata*.

The *tapta-kṛchchhra vrata* is carried out for the twelve days. For the first three days, one has to drink hot water; for the next three days, hot milk; for the next three days, hot ghee and for the next three days, air only. Every day one has to bathe once only under the above rules, and remain self-controlled. If one drinks water simply everyday under the above conditions, that is called the *prājāpatya-vrata*.

To remain without any food for twelve days according to rules is called the *parāka-kṛchchhra vrata*. By this *vrata*, all sins are destroyed.

Now about the rules of taking food in the *chāndrāyana-vrata*. In the dark fortnight one will have to decrease one mouthful of food every day and in the bright fortnight one will have to increase one mouthful every day and one has to fast completely on the *amāvasyā* (new moon) day. One has to bathe thrice daily during every *sandhyā* time. This is known as the *chāndrāyana-vrata*.

In the *śiśu-chāndrāyana vrata* one will have to take four mouthfuls of food in the midday and four mouthfuls in the evening. In the *yati-chāndrāyana* one has to take eight mouthfuls in the midday and to control his passions.

55. These abovementioned *vratas* are observed by the Rudras, Ādityas, Vāsus, and Maruts; and they are enjoying thereby their full safety.

Each of the above *vratas* purifies the seven *dhātus* of the body in seven nights! First skin, then blood, then flesh, bones, sinews, marrows and semen are purified. There is no doubt about this. Thus purifying the *ātman* by the above *vratas*, one is to do religious actions. The work done by such a purified man is sure to be met with success. First control the senses, be pure and do good actions. Then all your desires will be undoubtedly fructified. Fast for three nights without doing any actions and see the result. Perform

for three days the nocturnal *vratas*. Then proceed with your desired duties. If one works according to these methods, one gets the fruits of *puraścharanam*.

O Nārada! By the *puraścharanam* of Śrī Gāyatrī Devī all desires are fulfilled and all sins are destroyed. Before doing *puraścharanam* purify your body by performing the above *vratas*. Then you will get all your desires completely fulfilled. O Nārada! Thus I have spoken to you of the secret rules of *puraścharanam*. Never disclose this to any other; for it is recognized equivalent to the *Vedas*."

Here ends the Twenty-third Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on the Tapta Kṛchchhra vrata and others in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIV—On Sadāchāra

1. Nārada said: "O Bhagavān! Thou art the ocean of mercy; kindly speak out to me in brief all the things and the duties to be observed and applied in the *śānti-karmas* (peace-bringing acts) of Gāyatrī."

2-20. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! The question asked by you is esoteric. Never divulge this to a wicked person or any hypocrite. It is to be kept secret. While doing this *śānti-karma*, the Brāhmaṇas are to perform the *homas* with fuel soaked in milk (*payaḥ*). If the fuel of the *śamī* tree be offered in *homa* ceremony, then diseases caused by planets are cured. If the *homa* be performed with wet *aśvaththa* or *udumbara* or other *ksīra* trees, the diseases caused by demons and hobgoblins are cured. If one offers *tarpaṇam* with one palmful of water, repeating the *mantra* ***sūryam tarpayāmi namaḥ***, the pending evils are also averted and troubles are ceased. The repetition of the Gāyatrī *mantra* with knees immersed in water averts all evils. The repetition of Gāyatrī with body immersed in water up to the throat, averts the danger of life; and the same with whole body immersed grants all success. This is the best of all the *śānti-karmas*, the acts that bring health, wealth, happiness and peace. While performing *homa*, light with the fuel of

ksīravṛksa (the trees that emit milky juice); place *pañcha-gavya* in a vessel made of gold, silver, copper or wood of *ksīra* trees, or in the vessels made of earth, without any knot or crack; utter the Gāyatrī *mantra* and offer one thousand *homas*. Sprinkle with water at every offering, touching the *pañcha-gavya* with *kuśa* grass, a thousand times. Then offer the sacrifices there where calamities or nuisances are seen and meditate on the highest Devatā. Thus all the magic spells used by other persons for a malevolent purpose will be rendered nugatory. Bring under your control any Deva Yoni, Bhūte Yoni, or Piśācha Yoni that causes you troubles; then they will quit the house, village, city, way, even that kingdom.

Now hear how they are brought under control. Prepare a sacrificial altar with sand, draw a square on it, place a *śūla* (spear) in its center and plaster with *astagandha*. For the sake of converting all the evils, repeat Gāyatrī *mantra* a thousand times and impregnate it with the *mantra*, dig the ground and place or bury the *śūla* under it. Place on the level ground or *sthandila* a jar or *navaphala*, a fruit made of gold, silver, copper or a newly made earthen jar and enclose it with thread. Then have the sacred waters brought from the several *tīrthas* by the Brāhmaṇas and fill the jar, repeating the Gāyatrī *mantra*. Put within this jar the twigs, then of cardamom tree, sandal tree, *karpūra* tree, *jāti, aparājitā*, Saha Devī, Pātala, *mallikā* flower, *bel* leaves, rice, barley, *til*, mustard, *aśvattha* and *udumbara* trees and throw them within the jar. The ksīra trees are Aśvaththa, Udumbara, Plakṣa and Nyagrodha. Doing all these, prepare one *kuśa-kurcha* made of twenty-seven *kuśa* grass in the form of a braid of hair, round one end of a straight rod and tied in a knot and place it there. Then take your bath and repeat the Gāyatrī *mantra* over it one thousand times with your whole mind fully concentrated. Then the *Veda*-knowing Brāhmaṇas would recite the Saura *mantra* and sprinkle the man attacked by the demon with water and make him drink also the water saturated with the *mantra* and bathe him also with that. Then that person will be dispossessed of the devil and be happy. Even when the man possessed by a devil, is going to die, he gets his life again if he be made to drink this water saturated with this *mantra* and have his bath with that. So a wise King must do this, with a desire to have a long life; and

after he is sprinkled with this *mantra*-charged water he is to give one hundred cows to the Brāhmaṇas as the *dakśiṇā*.

21-44. The *dakśiṇā* is to be given according to one's might; and specially what gives satisfaction to the Brāhmaṇas. If one be terrified by a devil or by the mischievous magic spells of others, one is to sit on Saturday under an *aśvattha* tree and repeat one hundred Gāyatrīs. For the cure of all diseases, if one has to perform the *mṛtyunjaya-homa*, one will have to do homa with the *gulancha* creeper, soaked in milk and deducting the knots thereof. For the pacification of fever, mango leaves soaked with milk ought to be used in the *homa* ceremony. The wasting diseases are cured if *homa* be performed with the leaves of the *vacha* soaked in milk; phthisis or consumption is cured if *homa* be performed with curd, milk and ghee. Again, if offerings be given to the solar Deity, and if *pāyasānnam* be given to him and if this be given to the consumptive patient, his disease will be cured. Again, on the *amāvasyā-tithi* (new moon day) if *homa* be performed with *soma* creeper (excluding the knot joints) soaked in milk, then consumption will be cured. If *homa* be made with the flowers of the *śamkhya* tree, then leprosy is cured; if the *homa* be done with the seed of *apāmārga*, the *mṛgis* or the hysteric and epileptic fits are cured. So if *homa* be performed with the fuel of *kṣīra* trees, lunacy is cured; if, with the fuel of *udumbara*, *meha* (spermatorrhea) is cured; if with sugarcane juice, gonorrhea is cured; if with curd, milk and ghee or with the ghee of *kapilā* cow, the *homa* be performed, the *masūrikā* disease or smallpox will be cured, and if *homa* be performed with the fuels of *udumbara, vata* and *aśvatha* be performed, then the diseases of cows, elephants and horses are cured.

If the trouble be caused by many ants and anthills (*madhu-valmīka*) then perform the *homa* ceremony with the fuel of *samī* tree one hundred times, and with the food prepared of ghee one hundred times and offer sacrifices with the rest of the food; then the above troubles will cease. If there be an earthquake or if there be seen flashes of lightnings, then *homa* is to be performed with the fuel of *vana-vetasa* and the whole kingdom will be happy. If you surcharge any piece of iron with Gāyatrī *mantra* repeated

hundred times and if you throw it in any direction, then no fear will arise from that quarter out of fire, air, or any other enemy. If one be imprisoned, and if he repeats the Gāyatrī mentally, he will be liberated from the prison. If you touch the man possessed by a devil, disease or mortification and sorrow with *kuśa* grass and repeat the Gāyatrī mantra, and thus charge him with Divine electricity, that man will be liberated from the fear caused thereby. If you make the man possessed by devils, etc., drink the water charged with the Gāyatrī *mantra* or if you cast on his body the ashes charged with hundred Gāyatrīs or tie those ashes on his head repeating the Gāyatrī *mantra*, he will be instantly freed of all diseases and will live for a hundred years in happiness. In case a man is unable to do fully all these himself, he can get all these done by other Brāhmaṇas and pay *dakśiṇā* (fees) to them duly for the same.

O Nārada! Now I will tell you how nourishment and wealth are attained. Wealth is attained if the *homa* be performed with red lotus or fresh *jātī* flower or with *śāli* rice or with the fuel of *bel* tress, leaves, flowers, fruits or roots or with any portions thereof. If for one week the oblations be offered with fuel of *bel* tree mixed with *pāyasa* or with ghee one hundred times, then Lakṣmī Devī will surely be attained. If the *homa* be performed with *lāja* (fried rice) mixed with curd, milk, and ghee, a daughter will be obtained. If for one week, *homa* be performed with red lotus, then gold is obtained. If *tarpaṇam* (peace offering) be offered to the Sun, then treasures and gold hidden under water are obtained. If the *homa* be performed with food (*anna*) then *anna* is obtained; if *homa* be performed with rice, then rice is obtained.

45-51. If *homa* be performed with calf-dung, dried and powdered, then animals are obtained. If *homa* be performed with *priyangu*, *pāyasa* or ghee then progeny is obtained. If the oblations of *pāyasānna* be offered to the solar Deity and if the *prasādam* (remnant) be given to one’s wife under menstruation to eat, then excellent sons will be obtained. If the *homa* be performed with the fuel of wet pointed *ksīra* trees, then longevity is attained. If *homa* be performed with the fuel of the *palāśa* tree, pointed and

wet and mixed with curd, milk, and ghee for one hundred times consecutively, then longevity and gold are attained. If the *homa* be performed with *darbā* grass, milk, honey or ghee, one hundred times, then longevity and golden lotus are obtained. If for one week the *homa* ceremony be performed with the fuel of *śamī* tree mixed with food, milk or ghee one hundred times of each or if for one week the *homa* he performed with the fuel of *nyagrodha* tree and afterwards one hundred *homas* be made with *pāyasānna*, the fear of unnatural death is removed.

52-60. That man can conquer death who can remain for one week living on milk only and who performs during that time hundreds and hundreds of *homa* and repeats the Gāyatrī, controlling his speech. If anybody can fast three nights, control his speech and repeat Gāyatrī he gets himself freed from the hands of death; or totally immersed in water if he repeats Gāyatrī, he will be saved from the impending danger of death. If anybody repeats the Gāyatrī *mantra* for one month, taking his seat under a *bel* tree or performs *homa* with *bel* fruit, root or leaves, he gets kingdoms. Know all the *mantrams* are electric in their effects. Similarly if anybody performs *homa* with one hundred lotuses, he gets a foeless kingdom. So one becomes the lord of a village if one performs *homa* with *yavāgu* (barley gruel) and *sālidhānya*. If the *homa* be performed with the fuel of *asvaththa* tree, victory in battle is ensured and if the *homa* be performed with the fuel of *ākanda* tree, then victory everywhere is ensured. If one hundred *homa* be performed extending a week with *vetasa* tree's leaves or fruits, dipped in milk and mixed with *pāyasa*, rainfall is ensured. Similarly if anybody repeats Gāyatrī for one week with his body up to navel immersed in water, rainfall is ensured; on the contrary if the *homa* be performed with ashes in water, then the cessation of heavy rainfall is ensured. The *homa* with the fuel of *palāsa* gives *brahma-teja; homa* with the flowers of *palāsa* gives everything desired. *homa* with milk or drinking *brāhma-rasa*, charged with *mantra*, increases the intellect; and *homa* with ghee gives *buddhi* (*medhā*, intelligence).

61-69. *Homa* with flowers gives good smell; *homa* with thread gives cloth; *homa* with salt and honey mixed or *bel* flowers gives one power to control anything and everything that is desired. If anybody bathes every day, immersed completely within water and sprinkles water on his body, he becomes cured of diseases and he becomes very healthy. If any Brāhmaṇa does these things for others, he becomes also no doubt healthy. If anybody wants to increase his life period he should practice good deeds and repeat Gāyatrī thousand times daily for one month. Thus his longevity will be increased. Two months' such practice gives long life and perpetual health; three months' such practice will give life, health, and wealth, four months such practice gives longevity, wealth, fame, women, sons, etc., five months such practice gives longevity, health, wealth, wife, sons and learning. So one should repeat this as many months in proportion to the number of his desires and he would get them. Again any Brāhmaṇa who stands on one leg without holding any other thing and raises both his hands and daily repeats three hundred Gāyatrīs for one month, gets all his desires fulfilled. And if he repeats one thousand one hundred Gāyatrīs, there is nothing in this world that is not met and attained with success. Controlling the *prāṇa* (inhaling) and *apāna* (exhaling) *vāyu* (breath), he who repeats daily three hundred Gāyatrīs to the Devī, his highest desires are satisfied.

70-77. Viśvāmitra Ṛṣi says: 'Standing on one leg, with both hands raised and controlling *vāyu,* he who repeats daily one hundred Gāyatrīs for one month, gets all his desires fulfilled. Similarly with three hundred or thousand repeatings, all things are attained. Submerged under water, if one repeats Gāyatrīs as many times as mentioned above, he gets everything. If, for one year, with hands uplifted and without holding anything, anyone stands on one leg, controls one's breath and repeats Gāyatrī *mantra* three hundred times or thousand times, eating *havisyānnam* only in the night time, he becomes a Ṛṣi (Seer). This thing repeated two years gives infallible speech; three years gives knowledge of the present, past and future; four years will enable one to see face to face the Solar God; five years will give the eight *siddhis*, lightness, etc., six years will enable one to assume forms as he desires; seven years gives immortality; nine years gives Manuhood; ten

years gives Indrahood; eleven years gives Brahmāhood; and twelve years gives the state of Parama-Brahman.

78-90. O Nārada! By these practices of *tapasyā* you and other Ṛṣis have been able to conquer the three *lokas* (regions). Some ate only vegetables; some fruits; some, roots; some simply water; some, ghee; some, *soma-rasa;* whereas some others ate only *charu* and did *tapasyā*. Some Ṛṣis practiced this great *tapasyā* by eating very little for a fortnight only. Some ate only food they got by begging during the day; and some ate only *havisyānna*.

O Nārada! Now hear the rules for the purification and expiation of sins. For the expiation of the sin incurred in stealing gold, one is to repeat three thousand Gāyatrīs (daily) for one month; then the sin will be destroyed. By this act also the sins incurred by drinking or by going to one's *guru's* wife are destroyed. Viśvāmitra Ṛṣi says: 'The sin incurred by killing a Brāhmaṇa (*brahma-hātyā*) is destroyed if one erects a shed in a forest and living there, repeats three thousand Gāyatrīs daily for one month. Those Brāhmaṇas that have committed the great sins (*mahā-pātakas*), become free, if they repeat one thousand Gāyatrīs daily, submerged under water, for twelve successive days. By controlling speech and by practicing *prāṇāyāma*, if one repeats three thousand Gāyatrīs daily for one month, one will be free from the *mahā-pātakas*. If one practices one thousand *prāṇāyāmas* repeating the Gāyatrī, one becomes freed also of *brahma-hātyā*. If one draws upwards the *prāṇa* and *apāna-vāyus* six times, repeating the Gāyatrī with collected mind, this destroys all the sins and it is called all-sin destroying *prāṇāyāma*. If one practices this *prāṇāyāma* one thousand times for one month, the lord of the earth becomes freed of all sins. If any Brāhmaṇa incurs the sin of killing a cow, for twelve days he is to repeat three thousand Gāyatrīs daily for expiation. Similarly the repetition of ten thousand Gāyatrīs removes the sin of going to those not fit to be gone into, eating uneatables, stealing and killing, and this act brings in peace. All sins are destroyed by performing one hundred *prāṇāyāmas* with Gāyatrī. Again if there be a mixture of various sins, one will have to live in the forest for one month and repeat

one thousand Gāyatrīs, or practice fasting and repeat three thousand Gāyatrīs; thus all sins will be destroyed.

91-100. To repeat Gāyatrī twenty-four thousand times is equal to performing the *kṛchchhra-vrata* and to repeat sixty four thousand Gāyatrīs duly is equal to performing the *chāndrāyana*. If anybody repeats, in the morning and evening *sandhyā* times, the merit-giving Gāyatrī one hundred times, with *prāṇāyāma*, all his sins are destroyed. So, submerged under water, if one repeats the Gāyatrī Devī, meditating on Her in the Sun, one hundred times daily, one's all the sins are fully destroyed.

O Nārada! Thus I have described to you all about averting or destroying the evils and the purification of various sins. All this is secret. Keep it carefully concealed. Never divulge this. Whoever divulges this will bring his own ruin. I have spoken to you, in brief, all about *sadāchāra* (right way of living). If anybody practices this duly, according to rules, Śrī Mahā-Māyā Durgā Devī becomes pleased with him. If anybody wants to have both enjoyment and liberation, he is to practice all these daily, as well as the occasional, and *kāmya* (desired) duties duly according to rules. It is stated in all the *śāstras* that this *āchāra* (right way of living) is the foremost and the chief *dharma*, the Deity of which is the Supreme Mother Herself. O Nārada! That man who practices duly this *āchāra* is, even in this world, holy, happy and blessed. This I speak to you truly. If anybody desires to get the Devī Bhagavatī's Grace, he should first of all set himself at once to practice this *sadāchāra*. He who hears this gets wealth and great happiness. There is no doubt about this. Now speak what more you want to hear."

Here ends the Twenty-fourth Chapter of the Eleventh Skandha on Sadāchāra in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa. Here ends the Eleventh Skandha.

Twelfth Skandha

Chapter I—Description of Gāyatrī

1-7. Nārada said: "O Deva! The rules of *sadāchāra* (right ways of living) and the all-sin-destroying unequalled glories of the Devī Bhagavatī have been described by Thee. And I, too, have heard the nectar of the glories of the Devī from Thy lotus mouth. The *chāndrāyana* and other *vratas* described by Thee are very difficult to practice. So they are impracticable for ordinary persons. Therefore, O Lord! Kindly describe those actions which can easily be carried out by common persons; at the same time, the Devī's grace and *siddhis* can be obtained by those practices. Again, what thou hast described about the Gāyatrī in connection with *sadāchāra,* kindly say which are the chief and foremost, as well as those that are more meritorious. O best of the Munis! Thou hast told that there are the twenty-four syllables in the Gāyatrī. Kindly describe now their Ṛṣis, *chhandas*, Devatās and other things that should be known regarding them, and thus satisfy my longings."

8-27. Śrī Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! The twice-born would have done what they ought to do if they be engaged in repeating their Gāyatrī only, whether they be able or not able to practice the *chāndrāyana* and the other *vratas*. Whichever Brāhmaṇa repeats the Gāyatrī three thousand times and offers *arghya* to the Sun in the three *sandhyā* times, the Devas worship him; what to speak of other ordinary persons! Whether he practices *nyāsa* or not, if anybody sincerely repeats the Gāyatrī Devī, whose nature is existence, intelligence and bliss, and meditates on Her, even if he attains *siddhi* in one syllable even, then as a result of that, he can vie with the best of the Brāhmaṇas, the Moon, and the Sun; nay, with Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara even!

Note: The 24 syllables of the Gāyatrī *mantra* are as follows: 1) *tat* 2) *sa* 3) *vi* 4) *tur* 5) *va* 6) *ren* 7) *yam* 8) *bhar* 9) *go* 10) *de* 11) *va* 12) *sya* 13) *dhī* 14) *ma* 15) *hi* 16) *dhi* 17) *yo* 18) *yo* 19) *naḥ* 20) *pra* 21) *co* 22) *da* 23) *yā* 24) *ta.*

O Nārada! Now I will tell in due order the Ṛṣis, *chhandas*, and the Devatās of the twenty-four syllables of the Gāyatrī. The Ṛṣis, in due order, are (1) Vāma Deva, (2) Attri, (3) Vasiṣṭha, (4) Śukra, (5) Kanva, (6) Parāśara, (7) the very fiery Viśvamitra, (8) Kapila, (9) Śaunaka, (10) Yājñavalkya, (11) Bharadvāja, (12) the ascetic Jamadagṇi, (13) Gautama, (14) Mudgala, (15) Vedavyāsa, (16) Lomaśa, (17) Agastya, (18) Kauśika, (19) Vatsya, (20) Pulastya, (21) Mānduka, (22) the ascetic-in-chief Durvāsā, (23) Nārada and (24) Kaśyapa.

Now about the *chhandas:* (1) Gāyatrī, (2) Usnik, (3) Anustup, (4) Brihatī, (5) Pankti, (6) Trisnup, (7) Jagatī, (8) Atijagatī, (9) śakkarī, (10) Ati śakkarī, (11) Dhriti, (12) Ati Dhriti, (13) Virāt, (14) Prastārapankti, (15) Kriti, (16) Prākriti, (17) ākriti, (18) Vikriti, (19) Samkriti, (20) Aksarapankti, (21) Bhuh, (22) Bhuvah, (23) Svah and (24) Jyotismatī.

The Devatās of the several letters in due order, are: (1) Agṇi, (2) Prajāpati, (3) Soma, (4) Īśāna, (5) Savitā, (6) Āditya, (7) Bṛhaspati, (8) Maitrā Varuṇa, (9) Bhagadeva, (10) Aryamā, (11) Gaṇeśa, (12) Tvastrā, (13) Pūsā, (14) Indrāgnī, (l5) Vāyu, (16) Vāmadeva, (17) Maitrā varunī (18) Viśvadeva, (19) Mātṛkā, (20) Viṣṇu, (21) Vasu, (22) Rudra Deva, (23) Kuvera, and (24) the twin Aśvinī Kumāras.

O Nārada! Thus I have described to you about the Devatās of the twenty-four syllables. The hearing of this destroys all sins and yields the full results of repeating the *mantra* Gāyatrī.

Here ends the first Chapter of the Twelfth Skandha on the description of Gāyatrī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter II—the Śaktis of the syllables of Gāyatrī

1-18. Nārāyaṇa said: “O Nārada! O great Muni! Now hear which are the Śaktis in due order of the twenty-four syllables of the Gāyatrī Devī:

(1) Vāma Devī, (2) Priyā, (3) Satyā, (4) Viśvā, (5) Bhadravilāsinī, (6) Prabhā Vatī, (7) Jayā, (8) śāntā, (9) Kāntā, (10) Durgā, (11) Sarasvatī, (12) Vidrumā, (13) Viśāle'sā, (14) Vyāpinī, (15) Vimalā, (16) Tamopahārinī, (17) Sūksmā, (18) Viśvayoni, (19) Jayā, (20) Vaśā, (21) Padmālayā, (22) Parāśobhā, (23) Bhadrā, and (24) Tripadā.

Now hear the respective colors of the several syllables of the Gāyatrī Devī: (1) like *campaka* and *atasī* flowers, (2) like *vidruma* (a new sprout), (3) like crystal, (4) like lotus; (5) like the rising sun; (6) white like conchshell; (7) white like *kuṇḍa* flower; (8) like *prabāla* and lotus leaves; (9) like *padmarāga* (ruby), (10) like *indranīlamaṇi*; (11) like pearls; (12) like saffron; (13) like the black collyrium of the eye; (14) red; (15) like the *vaidūrya-maṇi*; (16) like *ksaudra* (*campaka* tree, honey, water); (17) like turmeric; (18) like *kuṇḍa* flower or milk (19) like the rays of the Sun; (20) like the tail of the bird *śuka;* (21) like *śatapatra* (a type of lotus); (22) like *ketakī* flower; (23) like *mallikā* flower; (24) like *karavīra* flower.

Now about their *tattvas:* (1) earth; (2) water; (3) fire; (4) air; (5) *ākāśa* (ether); (6) smell; (7) taste; (8) form; (9) sound; (10) touch; (11) male generative organ; (12) anus; (13) legs, (14) hands; (15) speech; (16) *prāṇa* (vital breath); (17) tongue; (18) eyes; (19) skin; (20) ears; (21) *prāṇa* (up-going breath); (22) *apāna;* (23) *vyāna* and (24) *sāmāna*.

Now about the *mudrās* of the syllables: (l) *sammukha;* (2) *samputa;* (3) *vitata;* (4) *vistrita;* (5) *dvimukha;* (6) *trimukha;* (7) *chaturmukha;* (8) *pañchamukha;* (9) *sanmukha;* (10) *adhomukha;* (11) *vyāpakānjali;* (12) *śakata;* (13) *yamapāśa;* (14) *grathita;* (15) *sanmukhon-mukha;* (16) *vilamba;* (17) *muṣṭika;* (18) *matsya;* (19) *kūrma;* (20) *varāhaka;* (21) *simhākrānta;* (22) *mahākrānta;* (23) *mudgara* and (24) *pallava*.

The *mahāmudrās* of the fourth foot of Gāyatrī are (1) *trisūlayonī;* (2) *surabhi;* (3) *akṣa-mālā;* (4) *liṅga* and (5) *ambuja*. O Nārada! Thus I have described to you all about the *mudras*, etc., of the several syllables of the Gāyatrī. If during Japam, one thinks all these and at the same time repeats, all his sins are destroyed, his wealth gets increased and fame attends on him."

Here ends the Second Chapter of the Twelfth Skandha on the description of the Śaktis, etc., of the syllables of Gāyatrī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter III—Kavaca of Śrī Gāyatrī Devī

1-3. Nārada spoke: "O Bhagavān! Thou art the Lord of this world; Thou canst show favor and disfavor both; Thou art specially versed in the sixty-four *kalās* (arts of learning); Thou art the chief of the *yogīs*. I therefore ask Thee to solve a doubt of mine. By what *puñyam* a man can become free from all his sins and limitations, realize and become of the nature of Brahman? O Lord! And what are duly the Ṛṣis, *chhandas*, Devatās, *dhyāna* and *nyāsa*, etc., of this meritorious act? I want to hear."

4-25. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! There is but one and only one way to this, and though that is very secret, I will disclose that to you. It is the Gāyatrī-*kavaca*. It can destroy all sins. Therefore to recite or to wear it on one's body enables the man to become free from all his sins, get all his desires fulfilled and he gets *sāyujya-mukti* with Devī (merged in the Devī's body). Now hear the Ṛṣis, *chhandas*, etc., of this *kavaca:* Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara are the Ṛṣis; the *Ṛk, Yajus, Sāma* and *Atharva-Vedas* are the *chhandas;* the Paramā Kalā Gāyatrī of the nature of Brahman is the Devatā; *tat* in Gāyatrī is the *bīja; bharga* is the Śakti; *dhīyaḥ* is the *kīlaka*; and its *viniyoga* (application) is getting *mokṣa* (liberation).

Now the *nyāsa:* With the first four syllables touch the heart; with the next three letters touch the head; with the next four letters touch the tuft on the crown of the head; with the next three letters on the *kavaca;* with the next four letters on the eyes and with the last four letters make the *nyāsa* all over the body repeating *astrāya phaṭ*.

O Nārada! Hear now the *dhyānam* of Gāyatrī, that grants all desires. The Gāyatrī Devī has five faces; one of which is of white color; and the other four are of pearl, *vidruma*, golden, and *nīlakāntamaṇi* color respectively. Each face has got three eyes; on the head there is a crown of jewels and the

digit of the Moon is shining there. Her body is composed of the twenty-four *tattvas*. She has ten hands: on the top right and left hands there are two lotuses; on the next lower there are disc and conchshell; lower down, there are rope and skull; lower down, there are noose and goad; and on the bottom hands right and left she is making signs of 'no fear' and 'ready to grant boons.' Thus meditating on Śrī Gāyatrī, one is to recite the *kavaca* thus:

Let the Gāyatrī Devī protect my front;
Sāvitrī Devī protect my right;
Sandhyā Devī, my back and
Devī Sarasvatī, my left.
Let my Mother Pārvatī Devī protect my quarters.
Let Jalaśāyinī protect the southeast;
Yātudhāna Bhayankarī protect my southwest;
Pavamānavilāsinī my northwest;
Rudrarūpinī Rudrānī protect my northeast.
Let Brahmānī protect my top and
Vaisnavī protect my nether regions.
Let the word *tat* in the Gāyatrī protect my legs;
savituḥ protect my knees;
varenyam protect my loins;
bhargaḥ, my navel.
Let *devasya* protect my heart;
dhīmahī protect my neck;
dhīyaḥ protect my eyes;
yaḥ protect my forehead,
naḥ protect my head; and
prachodayāt protect the tuft on the crown of my head.

Let *tat* protect my head;
sa protect my forehead;
vi protect my eyes;
tu my cheeks;

va protect my nostrils;
re my mouth;
ni protect my upper lip;
yaḥ protect my lower lip;
bha within my face;
rgo protect my cheeks;
de my throat;
va my shoulders;
sya my right hand;
dhi my navel;
ma my heart,
hi my belly;
dhī my navel;
yo my loins;
yo my anus;
naḥ my thighs,
pra my knees;
cho my shanks
da my heels;
yā my legs; and
let *at* protect all my sides.

O Nārada! This divine *kavaca* of the Devī Gāyatrī can baffle hundreds and thousands of obstructions and evils; can grant sixty-four *kalās* and liberation. By the glory of this *kavaca,* man can become free from all evils and can attain the state of Brahman. Moreover whoever reads or hears this acquires the fruits of making a gift of a thousand cows."

Here ends the Third Chapter of the Twelfth Skandha on the description of the Kavaca of Śrī Gāyatrī Devī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IV—Gāyatrī Hṛdāya

1-2. Nārada said: "O Bhagavān! I have heard from you all about the *kavaca* and the *mantra* of Śrī Gāyatrī. O Deva-Deva! O Thou, the knower of the present, the past, and the future! Now tell about the *hṛdāya*, the highest, the interior or esoteric essence of the Gāyatrī, holding which, if one repeats the Gāyatrī, he acquires all the *puñyam* (merits), I am desirous to hear this."

3-8. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! This subject of the *hṛdāya* of Gāyatrī is explicitly written in the *Atharva-Veda*. Now I will speak on that, the great secret, in detail. Listen. First, consider the Gāyatrī, the Devī, the Mother of the *Vedas* as a cosmic form (*virāt-rupā*) and meditate all the Devas as residing on Her Body. Now in as much as the *piṇḍa* (sphere) and *brahmāṇḍa* are similar, consider yourself as of the form of the Devī and meditate within yourself on the Devatās, thus:

"The Paṇḍitas, the knowers of the Vedas, say this: 'He is not yet fit to worship the Deva and he is not an *adhikārī* as yet who has not been able to make himself a Deva; therefore to establish the knowledge of the oneness of the Deva and himself, he is to meditate the Devas within his body, thus:"

O Nārada! Now I will speak on the *hṛdāya* of Gāyatrī, knowing which every man becomes able to become all the Devas. Listen. The Ṛṣi of this Gāyatrī *hṛdāya* is Nārāyaṇa; the *chhanda* is Gāyatrī; and Śrī Parameśvarī Gāyatrī is the Devatā. Perform the *nyāsa* of this as mentioned before and taking your seat in a lonely place, meditate intently on the Devī with your heart and head well collected.

Now I am speaking of the *artha-nyāsa*. Hear.

Meditate on the Devatā Dyau on your head;
the twin Aśvins on the rows of the teeth;
the two Sandhyās on your upper and lower lips;
Agṇi, Fire, within your mouth;
Sarasvatī, on the tongue;
Bṛhaspati on the neck;

the eight Vasus on the two breasts;
the Vāyus, on the two arms;
the Paryanya Deva on the heart;
ākāśa, on the belly;
antarīksam (the middle space) on the navel;
Indra and Agṇi, on the loins;
Prajāpati, the condensed form of *vijñāṇa*, on the hip joints;
Kailāśa and the Malaya mountains on the two thighs;
the Visvedevās on the two knees;
Viśvāmitra on the shanks;
the Sun's *uttarāyana* and *dakśiṇāyana* on the anus;
the Pitṛs on the thighs;
the Earth on the legs;
Vanaspati on the fingers and toes;
the Ṛṣis on the hairs of the body;
the Muhūrtas on the nails;
the planets on the bones;
the *ṛtus* (seasons) on the blood and flesh;
the *samvatsaras* on the *nimisa* (twinkling of eye)
the Sun and the Moon on the day and night respectively.

Thinking thus, repeat:

"I take refuge of the divine holy Gāyatrī, the chief and most excellent one, the thousand-eyed; I take refuge wholly unto Her."

"I bow down to *tat savitur varenyam*,
I bow down to the rising Sun in the east,
I bow down to the morning Aditya,
I bow down to the Gāyatrī residing in the morning Sun, and
I bow down to all."

O Nārada! Whoever recites this Gāyatrī *hṛdāya* in the morning finds all the sins committed in the night all destroyed! Whoever recites this in the evening gets his sins of the day all destroyed! Whoever recites this in the

evening and in the morning can rest assured to have become free of sins; he gets the fruits of all the *tīrthas;* he is acquainted with all the Devas; he is saved if he has spoken anything that ought not to have been spoken; if he has eaten anything that is not fit to be eaten; if he has chewn and sucked anything that ought not to have been chewn and sucked; if he has done anything that ought not to have been done and if he has accepted hundreds and thousands of gifts that ought never to have been accepted.

The sins incurred by eating with the others in a line cannot touch him. If he speaks lies, he will not be touched by the sins thereof; even if a non-*brahmachāri* recites this, he will become a *brahmachārī*. O Nārada! What more shall I say to you of the results of Gāyatrī *hṛdāya* than this: that whoever will study this will acquire the fruits of performing thousand

sacrifices and repeating the Gāyatrī sixty thousand times. In fact, he will get *siddhi* by this. The Brāhmāna who daily reads this in the morning will be freed of all the sins and go upwards to the Brahmaloka and is glorified there. This has been uttered by Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa Himself."

Here ends the Fourth Chapter of the Twelfth Skandha on Gāyatrī Hṛdāya in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter V—the Gāyatrī Stotra

1. Nārada said: "O all-knowing one! Thou showest Thy grace to Thy devotees! Thou hast described this sin-destroying Gāyatrī Hṛdāya. Now describe Her *stava* (hymn of praise)."

2-29. Nārāyaṇa said: "O World-Mother! O Thou, favoring Thy devotees! O Thou, the prime force, O omnipresent! Infinite! Śrī Sandhye! I bow down to Thee. Thou art the Sandhyā; Thou art the Gāyatrī, Sāvitrī and Sarasvatī; Thou art Brāhmī, Vaisnavī and Raudrī and Thou art red, white, and black (the colors of Gāyatrī, Sāvitrī and Sarasvatī) that Thou assumest respectively. O Bhagavatī! Thou art always meditated on by the Munis as young in the morning, full of youth in the midday, and aged in the

evening. I bow down to Thee. Thou art seen by the *tapasvis* (ascetics) as Brahmānī, riding on Hamsa (swan), Sarasvatī riding on Garuḍa, and Sāvitrī riding on Bull. Thou art seen within by the ascetics as maṇifesting the *Ṛg-veda* (in the form of Sāvitrī) in this world, as maṇifesting *Yajur-veda* in the middle space (*antariksam*) and as maṇifesting Sāmaveda everywhere in the Rudra-loka, thus roaming in the three worlds. I bow down to Thee. O Devī! Thou art Rudrānī in the Rudra-loka, Vaisnavī in the Viṣṇu-loka, and Brahmānī in the Brahma-loka; thus Thou showest Thy favor to the immortals. O Devī! Thou art the Mother delighting the seven Ṛṣis (of the Great Bear); Thou art Māyā. Thou grantest great many boons to Thy *bhaktas*. Thou art sprung from the eyes and hands, tears and perspiration of Śiva and Śivā. Thou art the Mother of delights, Durgā Devī, recited by the following ten names: Varenyā, Varadā, Varisthā, Varavarninī, Garisthā, Varāhā, Varārohā, Nīla-Gaṅgā, Sandhyā and Bhoga-Mokṣadā. Thou art the Bhāgirathī (the river Ganges) in this world; the Bhogavatī in the Pātāla; and the Mandākinī (the milky way) in the Heavens. Thou art in this world (Bhur-loka) the all-enduring Prithvī (earth); Thou art the Vāyu-Śakti (air power) in the middle space (Bhuvar-loka); Thou art the energy (the ocean of *tejas*) in the heavens (Svar-loka); Thou art the great *siddhi* in the Mahār-loka; Thou art Janā in the Janar-loka; Thou art Tapasvinī in the Tapo-loka; Thou art Truth (true speech) in the Satya-loka. Thou art Kāmalā in Viṣṇu-loka; Gāyatrī in Brahmā-loka; and the other half of Hara as Gaurī in the Rudra-loka. O Devī! Thou art sung as Prakṛti – *ahaṁ* and Āūṁ-Mahāt *tattva* and beyond that the highest Sarva-brahma-rūpinī and Sāmyāvasthā Prakṛti. Thou art the Parā-Śakti; Thou art the Paramā-Śakti; O Devī! Thou art the Tri-Śakti: the Ichchhā-Śakti (will power), the Kriyā-Śakti (power of action) and the Jñāṇa-Śakti (the force of knowledge). Thou art the Gaṅgā, Yamuṇā, Vipāśā, Sarasvatī, Sarayu, Devīkā, Sindhu; Narmadā, Īrāvatī, Godāvarī, Śatadru; Kāverī, Kauśikī, Chandra Bhāgā, Vitastā, Gandakī, Tapinī, Karatoyā, Gomatī, Vetravatī and other rivers; Thou art the *idā, piṅgalā* and *suśumnā* nerve channels; Thou art Gāndhārī, Hastajihvā, Pūsā, Apūsā, Alambusā, Kuhū, Śankhinī, Prāṇavāhinī and other nerves in the body; O Devī! Thou art the vital power in the lotus of the heart; Thou art *svapna-nāikā* in the throat; Thou art *sadādhārā* in the palate; and Thou art the

Vindumālinī-Śakti in the pituitary space between the eyebrows. Thou art the Kuṇḍalinī in the *mūlādhāra* (sacral plexus), the Vyāpinī extending up to the roots of the hairs; Thou art Madhyāsanā on the crown of the head, and Thou art Manonmanī in the *brahma-randhra*. O Devī! What need is there in stating these? Suffice it to say that whatever is seen in this universe, all art Thou; therefore, O Śrī Sandhyā Devī! I bow down to Thee."

O Nārada! Thus I have spoken to you about the Gāyatrī-*stotra* that gives all successes, destroys all sins, and yields all merits. He who reads this in the *sandhyā* times, with all attention, will get sons if he has no sons, will get wealth if he has no wealth. There is no doubt about this. Whoever reads this *stotra* gets the fruits of all *tīrthas*, all *tapasyās*, all gifts, all sacrifices and all *yogas*. He enjoys happiness in this world and finally gets *mokṣa*. The Munis who are engaged in *tapasyā* read this *stotra*. While bathing, if one recites this merged under water, he acquires the fruits of his being merged in the *sandhyā*. O Nārada! I speak this verily, verily, verily, unto you that there is no trace of any doubt in this statement. Whoever will hear with devotion this *sandhyā-stotra*, the nectar-like thing, will be freed from all sins."

Here ends the Fifth Chapter of the Twelfth Skandha on the Gāyatrī Stotra in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VI—1,008 Names of Gāyatrī

1-3. Nārada said: "O Bhagavān! O All-knowing One! O Thou versed in all the *śāstras!* I have heard from Thy mouth all the secrets of *śrutis* and *Smṛtis*. Now I ask Thee, O Deva! How can the knowledge of that *Veda-vidyā* (Learning) be obtained by which all sins are rooted out and destroyed, how is *brahma-jñāṇam* obtained and how can *mokṣa* be obtained? How can death be conquered and how can the best results be obtained in this world and in the next? O Lotus-eyed One! Thou ought to describe fully all these to me."

4-9. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! O highly-learned one! *Sādhu! Sādhu!* You have now put a nice question indeed! Now I will describe one thousand

eight names of Gāyatrī Devī. Listen attentively. All these sin-destroying auspicious names were composed by Brahmā and first recited by Him. Its Ṛṣi is Brahmā; the *chhanda* is *anuṣtup;* the Devatā is Gāyatrī; its *bīja* is *hala-varṇa* (consonants) and its Śakti is *svara-varṇa* (vowels). Perform the *aṅga-nyāsa* and the *kara-nyāsa* by the *mātṛkā-varṇas* (that is, by the fifty letters). Now hear its *dhyānam*, that will do good to the *sādhakas* (the practicers).

Note: *Aṅga-nyāsa* means touching the limbs of the body with the hand accompanied by appropriate *mantras*. *Kara-nyāsa* means assignment of the various parts of fingers and hand to different Deities accompanied with prayers and corresponding *mudrās*.

> "I worship the *kumārī* (virgin) Gāyatrī Devī, the lotus-eyed One, riding on the swan (the *prāṇas*), and seated on a lotus (creation); Who is three-eyed and of a red color; and Who is bright and decorated with gems and jewels of red, white, green, blue, yellow and other variegated colors; Who is holding in Her hands *kuṇḍikā* (waterpot), a *mālā*, lotus, making signs as if ready to grant the desired boons, and on whose neck is suspended a garland of red flowers. I worship the Devī Gāyatrī."

10-16. Now I will recite the one thousand eight names of the Gāyatrī, beginning with the syllable *a* and going on to *ā, i, ī*, etc., in due order of the alphabet. Listen!

Her ways and actions cannot be comprehended by intellect (*buddhi*); She is therefore Acintya-lakṣanā; She is Avyaktā (unmaṇifested; unspeakable); She is Artha-mātri-maheśvarī because She is the controller of Brahmā, etc.); She is Amṛtārnavai-madhyasthā, Ajitā and Aparājitā. Thou art Animādigunādhārā, Arka-maṇḍala-samsthitā, Ajarā, Ajā, Aparā, Adharmā (She has no *dharma*, caste, etc.), Akṣa-sūtra-dharā, Adharā; Akārā-dakṣa-kārāntā (beginning with the syllable *a* and ending with the syllable *kṣa*, thus comprising the fifty Sanskrit letters), Arisad-varga-bhedinī (destroying the five passions), Anjanādri-pratīkāśā, Anjanādri-nivāsinī, Aditi, Ajapā, Avidyā, Aravindani-bheksanā, Antarvahihsthitā, Avidyādhvamsinī, and

Antarātmikā. Thou art Ajā Aja-mukhā-vāsā (residing in the mouth of Brahmā), Aravindani-bhānanā (therefore also called Vyanjana-varnātmikā), Ardha-mātrā, Artha-dānajñā (because She grants all the *purusārthas*) Ari-maṇḍala-mardinī, Asuraghnī, Amāvāsyā, Alaksīghnī, Antyajārcitā. Thus end Her names beginning with *A*.

Now the names beginning with *Ā:* Thou art Ādi-Lakṣmī, Ādi-Śakti, Ākṛti, Āyatānanā, Ādi-tyapada-vichārā, Āditya-parisevitā, Āchāryā, Āvartanā, Āchārā, and Ādi-mūrti-nivāsinī.

17-18. Thou art Āgneyī, Āmarī, Ādyā, Ārādhyā, Āsana-sthitā, Ādhāra-nilayā (seated in the *mulādhāra*), Ādhārā (the refuge of all), and Ākāśānta-nivāsini (of the nature of *ahaṁ-tattva*); Thou art Ādyākṣara-samāyuktā, Āntarākāśa-rūpinī, Āditya-maṇḍala-gatā, Āntara-dhvānta-nāśinī (destroyer of the *moha* of *jīvas*). Then come the names beginning with *I*.

19-25. Thou art Indirā, Iṣṭādā, Iṣṭā, Indīvarani-veksanā, Irāvatī, Indrapadā, Indrānī, Indurūpinī, Ikṣu-kodaṇḍa-samyuktā, Iśu-sandhāna-kārinī, Indra-nīla-samakārā, Idā-piṅgala-rūpinī, Indrākṣī, Īśvarī, Devī Īhātraya-vivarjitā.

Thou art Umā, Uṣā, Udunibhā, Urvāru-kapha-lānanā, Uduprabhā, Udumatī, Udupā, Udumadhyagā, Ūrdhā, Ūrdhakeśī, Ūrdha-dhogati-bhedinī, Ūrdha-vāhu-priyā, Ūrmi-mālā-vāggrantha-dāyinī. Thou art Ṛta, Ṛṣi, Ṛtumatī (the creatrix of the world), Ṛṣidevanamaskritā, Ṛgvedā, Ṛnahartrī, Ṛṣimaṇḍala-chārinī, Ṛddhidā, Ṛjumārgasthā, Ṛjudharmā, Ṛjupradā, Ṛgvedanilayā, Ṛjvī, Ḷupta-dharma-pravartinī, Ḷūtārivara-sambhūtā, Ḷūtādivisa-hārinī.

26-30. Thou art Ekākṣarā, Ekamātrā, Ekā, Ekai-kaniṣṭhitā, Aindrī, Airāva-tārūdhā, Aihikāmusmika-pradā, Omkārā, Osadhī, Otā, Otaprota-nivāsinī,

Aurbbā, Ausadhasampannā, Aupāsanaphalapradā, Aṅda-madhya-sthitā, Ahkāramanu-rūpinī. Visarga-rūpinī.

Thus end the names beginning with vowels. Now begin the names beginning with consonants.

Thou art Kātyāyanī, Kālarātri, Kāmākṣī, Kāmasundarī, Kāmalā, Kāminī, Kāntā, Kāmadā, Kālakanthinī, Karikumbha-stana-bharā, Karavīra Suvāsinī, Kalyanī, Kuṇḍalavatī, Kurukṣetrani-vāsinī, Kuruviṇḍa, Kalākārā, Kuṇḍalī, and Kumudālayā.

31-32. Thou art Kāla-jhibhā, Karālāsyā, Kālikā, Kāla-rūpinī, Kāmanī-yagunā, Kānti, Kalādhārā, Kumudvatī, Kauśikī, Kāmalākārā, Kāmachāra-prabhanjinī. Thou art Kaumarī, Karunāpāṅgī, Kakubanta (as presiding over all the quarters), and Karipriyā.

33-37. Thou art Keśarī, Keśavanutā, Kadamba-kuśumapriyā, Kālindī, Kālikā, Kāñchī, Kalaśodbha-vasamstutā. Thou art Kāmamātā, Kratumatī, Kāmarūpā, Kṛpāvatī, Kumārī, Kuṇḍa-nilayā, Kirātī, Kīravāhana, Kaikeyī, Kokilālāpā, Ketakī, Kusuma-priyā, Kāmaṇḍalūdharā, Kālī, Karmaṇir-mūlakārinī, Kalahansagati, Kakṣā, Kṛtā, Kṛta, Kautukāmaṅgalā, Kastūrītilakā, Kamrā, Karīndra-gamanā, Kuhū, Karpūralepanā, Kṛṣṇā, Kapilā, Kuharāśrayā, Kūtasthā, Kudharā, Kamrā, Kukṣisthākhila-vistapā. Thus end the names with *Ka*. Now come those with *Kha*.

38-62. Thou art Khadga, Khetadharā, Kharbhā, Khecharī, Khagavāhanā, Khattānga-dhārinī, Khyāta, Khagarājo-paristhitā, Khalaghnī, Khanditajarā, Khadākṣyāna-pradāyinī, Khandendu-tilakā.

Thou art Gaṅgā, Gaṇeśa guhapūjita, Gāyatrī, Gomatī, Gītā, Gāndhārī, Gānalolupā, Gautamī, Gāminī, Gādhā, Gandharvāpsara-sevitā, Govinda-charanā-krāntā, Guṇatraya-vibhābitā, Gandharvī, Gahvarī, Gotrā, Girīśā, Gahanā, Gamī, Guhāvāsā, Guṇavatī (of good qualities), Gurupāpa-pranāśinī, Gurbhī, Guṇavatī (of the three *guṇas*), Guhyā, Goptavyā, Guṇadāyinī, Girijā, Guhyamātangī, Garuḍa-dhvaja-vallabhā, Garvāpahārinī, Godā (granting heaven), Gokulasthā, Gadādharā, Gokarṇanilayā-saktā, and Guhyamaṇḍala-vartinī.

Now the names beginning with *Gha*: Thou art Gharmadā, Ghanadā, Ghantā, Ghora-dānava-marddinī, Ghrinī-mantra-mayī (of the Sūrya-*mantra*, *ghrinī* means to shine), Ghosā, Ghana-sampāta-dāyinī, Ghantāra-

vapriyā, Ghrānā, Ghrini-santuṣṭi-kārinī (giving pleasure to the Sun), Ghanāri-maṇḍalā, Ghūrnā, Ghṛtāchī, Ghanaveginī, Gñānadhātumayī.

Thou art Charchā, Charcitā, Chāruhāsinī, Chatulā, Caṇḍikā, Citrā, Citramālyayi bhūsitā, Chaturbhujā. Chāru-dantā, Chāturī, Charitapradā, Chūlikā, Citravastrāntā, Chandramah-karṇa-kuṇḍalā, Chandrahāsā, Chārudātrī, Chakorī, Ghandrahāsinī, Chandrikā, Chandradhātrī, Chaurī, Chorā, Caṇḍikā, Chanchadvāg-vādinī, Chandra-chūdā, Chora-vināśinī, Chāru-chhandana-liptāngī, Chanchach-chāmara-vījitā, Chārumadhyā, Chārugati, Caṇḍīlā, Chandrarūpinī, Chāruhoma-priyā, Chārvā, Charitā, Chakrabāhukā, Chandra-maṇḍala-madhyasthā, Chandra-maṇḍala-darpanā, Chakra-vākastanī, Chestā, Citrā, Chāru-vilāsinī, Cit-svarūpā; Chhandavatī, Chandramā, Chhandana-priyā, Chodayitrī (as impelling the *jīvas* always to actions), Chiraprajñā, Chātakā, Chāruhetukī.

Thou art Chhatrayātā, Chhatradharā, Chhāyā, Chhandhah-parichchhadā, Chhāyā-Devī, Chhidranakhā, Chhannendriya-visarpinī, Chhandonustup-pratiṣṭhāntā, Chhidropadrava-bhedinī, Chhedā, Chhatreśvarī, Chhinnā, Chhurikā and Chhelanpriyā.

Thou art Jananī, Janmra-rahitā, Jātaveda, Jaganmayī, Jāhnavī, Jatilā, Jatrī (Jetrī), Jarāmarana-varjitā, Jambudvīpa-vatī, Jvālā, Jayantī, Jalasālinī, Jitendrīyā, Jitakrodhā, Jitāmitrā, Jagatpriyā, Jātarūpa-mayī, Jihvā, Jānakī, Jagatī, Jarā (Jayā), Janitrī, Jahnutanayā, Jagattraya-hitaisinī, Jvālamulī, Japavatī, Jvaraghnī, Jitavistapā, Jitākrāntamayī, Jāgratī, Jvaradevatā, Jvalantī, Jaladā, Jyesthā, Jyāghosā-sphota-dinmukhī, Jambhinī, Jṛmbhanā, Jṛmbhā, Jvalanmānikya-kuṇḍalā. Jhinjhikā, Jhana-nirghosā, Jhanjhā, Māruta-veginī, Jhallakīvādya-kuśalā, Nṛūpā, Nbhujā, Tanka-bhedinī, Tanka-bānasamāyuktā, Tankinī, Tanka-bhedinī, Tankīgana-kritāghosā, Tankanīya-mahorasā, Tankāra Kārinī, Thatha-śavdaninādinī.

63-80. Now come the names beginning with *Da*. They are: Dāmarī, Dākinī, Dimbhā, Duṇḍa-māraikanirjitā, Dāmarī-tantra-margasthā, Daṇḍa-damaru-nādinī, Dindīra-vasahā, Dimbhalasat-krīdāparāyanā (dancing with joy in battles).

Then Dhuṇḍhi-vighneśa-jananī, Dhakkā-hastā, Dhilivrajā (followed by Śiva-gaṇas), Nityajñānā, Nirupamā, Nirguṇa and Narmadā.

Now: Trigunā, Tripadā, Tantrī, Tulasī, Tarunā, Tārā, Trivikrama-padā-krāntā, Tūrīya-padagāminī, Tarunā-ditya-saṅkaśā, Tāmasī, Tuhinā, Turā, Trikāla-jñāṇa-sampannā, Trivalī, Trilochanā, Tri-Śakti, Tripurā, Tuṅgā, Turaṅgavadanā, Timiṅgilagilā, Tibrā, Tṛṣrotā, Tāmasādinī, Tantra-mantra-viśesajñā, Tanumadhyā, Tṛvipstapā, Trisandhyā, Tristanī, Tosāsamsthā, Tālapratāpinī, Tātankinī, Tusārābhā, Tuhināchala-vāsinī, Tantujāla-samāyuktā, Tārahārā-balipriyā, Tilahoma-priyā, Tīrthā, Tamāla-kusumā-kṛti, Tārakā, Triyutā, Tanvī, Triśam-kuparivāritā, Talodarī, Tirobhāsā, Tātaṅka-priyavādinī, Trijatā, Tittirī, Tṛṣṇā, Tribidhā, Tarunā-kritī, Tapta-kānchana-samkāśā, Tapta-kāñchana-bhūsanā, Traiyambakā, Trivargā, Trikālajñāṇa-dāyinī, Tarpaṇā, Tṛptidā, Tṛptā, Tāmasī, Tumvarustutā, Tārksyasthā, Triguṇākārā, Tribhangī, Tanuvallarī, Thātkārī, Thāravā, Thāntā.

Dohinī, Dīnavatsalā, Dānavānta-karī, Durgā, Durgāsura-nivahṛnī, Devarīti, Divārātri, Draupadī, Duṇḍa-bhiṣvanā, Devayānī, Durāvāsā, Dāridrya-bhedinī, Divā, Dāmodara-priyā, Dīptā, Digvāsā, Dig-vimohinī, Danda-kāranya-nilayā, Daṇḍinī, Deva-pūjitā, Deva-vandyā, Divisādā, Dveśinī, Dānavā-kṛti, Dīnanā-thastutā, Dīkṣā, Daivaśā-disvarupinī, Dhātri, Dhanurdharā, Dhenur-dhārinī, Dharmachārinī, Dhurandharā, Dharādharā, Dhanadā, Dhānya-dohinī, Dharmaśīlā, Dhanādhyaksā, Dhanurveda-viśāradā, Dhṛti, Dhanyā, Dhṛtapadā, Dharmarāja-priyā, Dhruvā, Dhūmavatī, Dhūmakeśī, Dharma-śāstra-prakaśinī.

81-98. Nandā, Nanda-priyā, Nidrā, Nṛnutā, Nandanātmikā, Narmadā-nalinī, Nīlā, Nīlakantha-samāśrayā, Rudrānī, Nārāyaṇa-priyā, Nityā, Nirmalā, Nirguṇa, Nidhi, Nirādhārā, Nirupamā, Nityaśuddhā, Nirajñānā, Nādabindu-kalātītā, Nādavindu-kalātmikā, Nṛṣiṁhinī; Nagadharā, Nṛpanāga-vibhūsitā, Naraka-kleśanāśinī, Nārāyaṇa-padodbhavā, Niravadyā, Nirākārā, Nārada-priyakārinī, Nānājyotih, Nidhidā, Nirmalātmikā, Nava-sūtra-dharā, Nīti, Nirūpa-drava-kārinī, Nandajā, Nava-ratnādhyā, Naimīsāranya-vāsinī, Navanīta-priyā, Nārī, Nīla-jīmūta-

nisvanā, Nimeṣinī, Nadīrūpā, Nīlagrīvā, Niśiśvarī, Nāmāvalī, Niśumbhaghnī, Nāgaloka-nivāsinī, Navajāmbū-nadaprakhyā, Nāgalokādhidevatā, Nūpūrā-krāntacharanā, Naracitta-pramodinī, Nimagnā-raktanayanā, Nirghāta-sama-nisvanā, Nandanodyānilayā, Nirvya-hoparichārinī.

99-107. Pārvatī, Paramodārā, Parabrahmātmikā, Parā, Pañcha-kośa-vinirmuktā, Pañchapātaka-nāśinī, Para-citta-vidhānajñā, Pañchikā, Pañcharūpinī. Pūrnimā, Paramā-prīti, Paratejaḥ-prakaśinī, Purānī, Paurusī, Punyā, Pundarī-kanibhekṣanā, Pātāla-tala-nirmmagnā, Prītā, Prīti-vivardhinī, Pāvanī, Pāda-sahitā, Peśalā, Pavanāśinī, Prajāpatī, Pariśrāntā, Parvatastana-maṇḍalā, Padmapriyā, Padmasamsthā, Padmāksī, Padmasambhavā, Padmapatrā, Padmapadā, Padminī, Priyabhāsinī, Paśupāśa vinirmuktā, Purandhrī, Puravāsinī, Puskalā, Purusā, Parbhā, Pārijāta-kusuma-priyā, Pativratā, Pativratā, Pavitrāṅgī, Puspahāsa parāyanā, Prajñāvatīsutā, Pautrī, Putrapūjyā, Payasvinī, Pattipā-śadharā, Paṅkti, Pitṛloka-pradāyinī, Purānī, Punyaśila, Prāṇatārti-vināśinī, Pradyumna-jananī; Pustā, Pitāmahā-parigrahā, Puṇḍarīka-purāvāsā, Puṇḍarīka-samānanā, Pṛthujanghā, Pṛthubhujā, Pṛthupādā, Pṛthūdarī, Pravālaśobhā, Piṅgāksī, Pītavāsāḥ, Prachāpalā, Prasavā, Puṣṭidā, Puñyā, Pratiṣṭhā, Prāṇavā, Patī, Pañchavarnā, Panchavānī, Pañchikā, Panjarasthitā, Paramāyā, Parajyotiḥ, Paraprīti, Parāgati, Parākāsthā, Pareśanī, Pāvanī, Pāvaka-dyutī, Punyabhadrā, Parichchhedyā. Puspahāsā, Pṛthūdarā, Pītāngī, Pītavasanā, Pītaśayā, Piśāchinī, Pītakriyā, Piśāchaghnī, Pātalāksī, Patukriyā, Pañchabhakṣa-priyāchārā, Putanā-prāṇaghātinī, Punyā-gavanamadhyasthā, Punya-tīrtha-nisevitā, Panchāṅgī, Parā-Śakti, Paramādhāda-kārinī, Puṣpa-kāndasthitā, Pūṣā, Positākhila-vistapā, Pānapriyā, Pañchaśikhā, Pannagopariśāyinī, Pañcha-mātrātmikā, Pṛthvī, Pathikā, Pṛthudohinī, Purāṇanyāyamīmansā, Pātalī, Puṣpa-gandhinī, Punyaprajā, Pāradātrī, Paramārgaika-gocharā, Pravālaśobhā, Pūrnāśā, Prāṇavā, Palhabodarī.

108-149. Phalinī, Phaladā, Phalgu, Phutkārī, Phalakākritī, Phanindra-bhogaśayanā, Phani-maṇḍala-manditā, Bālabālā, Bahumatā, Bālāta-panibhāmśukā, Balabadra-priyā, Bandyā, Badavā, Buddhi-samstutā,

Bandīdevī, Bilavatī, Badiśaghinī, Baliprīyā, Bāndhavī, Bodhitā, Buddhir-bandhūka-kusumapriyā, Bālabhānu-prabhākārā, Brāhmī, Brāhmaṇa-devatā, Bṛhaspati-stutā. Bṛṇdā, Bṛṇdavana-vihārinī, Bālākinī, Bilāhāra, Bilavasā, Bahūdakā, Bahunetrā, Bahupadā, Bahu-karnāvatamsikā, Bahubāhuyutā, Bijarūpinī, Bahurūpinī, Biṇḍunādakalātitā, Biṇḍunāda-svarūpinī, Baddha-godhāngulitrānā, Badaryāśrama-vāsinī, Bṛṇdārakā, Bṛhatskandhā, Bṛhatī, Bānapātinī, Bṛṇdādhyaksā, Bahunutā, Vanitā, Bahuvikramā, Baddha-padmāsanāsīna, Bilva-patra-talasthitā, Bodhi-drumaṇi-jāvāsā, Badisthā, Biṇḍu-darpanā, Bālā, Bānāsanavatī, Badavānalaveginī, Brahmāṇḍa-bahir-aṅtasthā, Brahma-kaṅkana-sūtrinī,

Bhavānī, Bhīsanavatī, Bhāvinī, Bhayahārinī, Bhadrakālī, Bhujangāksī, Bhāratī, Bhāratāśayā, Bhairavī, Bhīsanākārā, Bhūtidā, Bhutimālinī, Bhāminī, Bhoganiratā, Bhadradā, Bhūrivikramā, Bhūtavāsā, Bhṛgulatā, Bhārgavī, Bhūsurārcitā, Bhāgīrathī, Bhogavatī, Bhavanasthā, Bhiṣagvarā, Bhāminā, Bhoginī, Bhāsā, Bhūridakśiṇā, Bhargātmikā, Bhāmavatī, Bhava-bandha-vimochinī, Bhajanīyā, Bhūtadhātri-ranjitā, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhujaṅgavalayā, Bhīmā, Bherundā, Bhāgadheyinī.

Thou art Mātā, Māyā, Madhumatī, Madhujihavā, Manupriyā, Mahādevī, Mahābhāgīyā, Mālirī, Mīnalochanā, Māyātītā, Madhumatī, Madhumānsā, Madhudravā, Mānavī, Madhusambhūtā, Mithilāpuravāsinī, Madhu-kaitabha-samhartrī, Medinī, Meghamālinī, Mandodarā, Mahā-Māyā, Maithilī, Maṣṛṇapriyā, Mahā-Lakṣmī, Mahā-Kālī, Mahā-Kanyā, Maheśvarī, Māhendrī, Merutanayā, Mandāra-kusumārcitā, Manju-manjīra-charanā, Mokṣadā, Manjubhasinī, Madhuradrāvinī, Mudrā, Malayā, Malayānvitā, Medhā, Marakata-śyāmā, Māgadhī, Menakātmajā, Mahāmārī, Mahāvīrā, Mahāśyāmā, Manustutā, Mātṛkā, Mihirābhāsā, Mukuṇḍapada-vikramā, Mūlādhāra-sthitā, Mugdhā, Maṇipūrani-vāsinā, Mṛgāksī, Mahisārūdhā, Mahiṣāsura-mardinī.

Thou art Yogāsanā, Yogagamyā, Yogā, Yauvanakāśrayā, Yauvanī, Yuddha-madhyasthā, Yamuṇā, Yugādharinī, Yakṣinī, Yogayuktā, Yakṣa-rāja-prasūtinī, Yātrā, Yāna-bidhanajñā, Yaduvanśa-samudbhavā, Yakārādi-ha-

kārāntā (all *āntaḥstha-varṇas* or mixed castes), Yājusī, Yajñā-rūpinī, Yāminī, Yoganiratā. Yātudhāna, Bhayaṅkarī,

Rukmiṇī, Ramaṇī, Rāmā, Revatī, Renukā, Ratī, Raudrī, Raudra-priyākārā, Rāma-mātā, Ratipriyā, Rohinī, Rājyadā, Revā, Rasā, Rājīvalochanā, Rākeśī, Rūpa-sampannā, Ratna-siṁhāśana-sthitā, Rakta-mālyāmbara-dharā, Rakta-gandhānu-lepanā, Rāja-haṅsa-samārūdhā, Rambhā, Rakta-balipriyā, Ramanīya-yugādhārā, Rājitākhila-bhūtalā, Rurucharmapari-dhānā, Rathinī, Ratnamālikā, Rogeśī, Rogaśamanī, Rāvinī, Romahārṣinī, Rāmachandra-padā-krāntā, Ravanach-chhedakārinī, Ratnavastra-parichchhinvā, Rathasthā, Rukma-bhūsanā,

Lajjādhidevatā, Lolā, Lalitā, Liṅgadhārinī, Lakṣmī, Lolā, Luptavisā, Lokinī, Lokaviśrutā, Lajjā, Lambhodarī, Lalanā, Lokadhārinī-varadā, Vanditā, Vidyā, Vaiṣṇavī, Vimalākṛti, Vārāhī, Virajā, Varṣā, Vara-lakṣmī, Vilāsinī, Vinatā, Vyoma-madhyasthā, Vārijāsana-samsthitā, Vāruṇī, Venu-sambhutā, Vītihotrā, Virūpinī, Vāyu-maṇḍala-madhyasthā, Viṣṇurūpā, Vidhikriyā, Viṣṇupatnī, Viṣṇumatī, Viśālāksi, Vasundharā, Vāmadevapriyā, Velā, Vajrinī, Vasudohinī, Vedākṣara-parītāṅgī, Vājapeya-phalapradā, Vāsavī, Vāmajananī, Vaikuṇṭha-nilayā, Varā, Vyāsapriyā, Varmadharā, Vālmīki-parisevitā.

Thou art Śakambharī, Śivā, Śantā, Śaradā, Śaranāgati, Śātodarī, Śubhāchārā, Śumbhāsuramardinī, Śobhābati, Śivākārā, Śaṅkarārdhaśarīrini, Śonā (red), Śubhāśayā, Śubhrā, Śiraḥ-sandhāna-kārinī, Śarāvatī, Śarānandā, Śarajjyotanā, Śubbānanā, Śarabhā, Śūlinī, Śuddhā, Śabarī, Śukavāhanā, Śrīmatī, Śrīdharānandā, Śravanānanda-dāyinī, Śarvānī, Śarbharīvandyā,

Ṣadbhāsā, Ṣadritupriyā, Ṣadādhāra-sthitā-devī, Ṣanmukha-priyakārinī, Ṣadaṅgarūpa-sumatī, Ṣurāsura-namaskṛtā.

150-155. Thou art Sarasvatī, Sadādhārā, Sarva-maṅgala-kārinī, Sāmagāna-priyā, Sūksmā, Sāvitrī, Sāmasambhavā, Sarvavāsā, Sadānandā, Suṣṭanī, Sāgarāmbarā, Sarvaiśyarya-priyā, Siddhi, Sādhu-bandhu-parākramā,

Saptarsi-maṇḍala-gatā, Soma-maṇḍala-vāsinī, Sarvajñā, Sāndrakarunā, Samānādhika-varjitā, Sarvottungā, Saṅgahīnā, Sadgunā, Sakalestadā, Saraghā (bee), Sūryatanayā, Sukeśī, Somasamhati,

Hiraṅyavarnā, Harinī, Hṛīṁkārī, Hamsavāhinī,

Kṣauma-vastra-parītāṅgī, Kṣīrābdhitanayā, Kṣamā, Gāyatrī, Sāvitrī, Pārvatī, Sarasvatī, Vedagarbhā, Varārohā, Śrī Gāyatrī, and Parāmvikā.

156-159. O Nārada! Thus I have described to you one thousand eight names of Gāyatrī; the hearing of which yields merits and destroys all sins and gives all prosperity and wealth. Specially in the Aṣṭamī-tithi (eighth lunar day) if after one's meditation (*dhyānam*) worship, *homa* and *japam*, one recites this in company with the Brāhmaṇas, one gets all sorts of satisfactions. These one thousand eight names of the Gāyatrī ought not to be given to anybody indiscriminately. Speak this out to him only who is very devoted, who is a Brāhmaṇa, and who is an obedient disciple. Even if any devotee, fallen from the observances of *ācharā* (right way of living), be a great friend, still do not disclose this to him.

160-165. In whatever house these names are kept written, no cause of fear can creep in there and Lakṣmī, the Goddess of wealth, though unsteady, remains steady in that house.

This great secret yields merits to persons, gives wealth to the poor, yields *mokṣa* to those who are desirous of it, and grants all desires. If anybody reads this, he gets cured of his diseases, and becomes freed from bondage and imprisonment. All the great sins, for example murdering Brāhmaṇas, drinking wine, stealing gold, going to the wife of one's *guru*, taking gifts from bad persons, and eating the uneatables, all are destroyed, yea, verily destroyed! O Nārada! Thus I have recited to you this great secret. All persons get, indeed, united with Brahman (*brahma-sāyujya*) by this. True. True. True. There is not the least trace of doubt here."

Here ends the Sixth Chapter of the Twelfth Skandha on the one thousand eight names of the Gāyatrī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VII—*Dīkṣā-vidhi:* Rules of Initiation

1-3. Nārada said: "I have heard the one thousand names or *nāma-stotras* equivalent in its fruits to Śrī Gāyatrī, highly potent in making good fortune and tending to a splendid increase of the wealth and prosperity. Now I want to hear about how initiations in *mantrams* are performed, without which nobody, be he a Brāhmaṇa, a Kṣatriya, a Vaiśya or a Śūdra, is entitled to have the Devī-mantra. O Lord! Kindly describe the ordinary (*sāmānya*) and the special (*viśesa*) rules thereof."

4-41. Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! Listen. I am now telling you about the rules of initiation (*dīkṣā*) of the disciples, pure in heart. When they are initiated, they become entitled then—and not before that—to worship the Devas, the fire and the *guru*. That method of instruction, religious act and ceremony is called *dīkṣā* (initiation) by which divine knowledge is imparted, and at once flashes in the heart and mind of the initiate that knowledge, and all his sins are then destroyed. So the Paṇḍitas of the *Vedas* and *Tantras* say. The divine knowledge is like lightning or fire, arising and permeating the body, mind, and spirit.

This *dīkṣā* ought to be taken by all means. This gives excellent merits and pure results. Both the *guru* and the *siśya* (disciple) ought to be very pure and true. This is the first essential requisite. Then the results are instantaneous. First of all, the *guru* is to perform all the morning duties, he is to take his bath and perform his *sandhyā-vandanās*. He is to return home from the banks of the river with his *kāmaṇḍalū* and observe *maunam* (silence). Then to give *dīkṣā*, he is to enter into the assigned room (*yāga-maṇḍapa*) and take his seat on an *āsana* that is excellent and calculated to please all. He is to perform *āchanara* and do *prāṇāyāma*. Then he should take water in his *arghya* vessel and putting scents and flowers in that, charge

that water with *phaṭkāra-mantra*. Then uttering the *mantra* ***phaṭ***, he is to sprinkle the water on the doorways of the worshiproom and begin his *pūjā*. Firstly, on the top of the door at one end invoke the Deity Gaṇanāthā (Gaṇapati) by His *mantra*, at the other end invoke Sarasvatī by Her *mantra* and at the middle, invoke Lakṣmī Devī by Her *mantra* duly and worship Them with flowers. Then, on the right side worship Gaṅgā and Vighneśa; and on the left side worship Kṣetrapāla and Yamuṇā, the daughter of the Sun. Similarly, on the bottom of the door, worship the Astra-Devatā by the *phaṭ mantra*. Then consider the whole *maṇḍapa* as inspired with the presence of the Devī, and see the whole place as pervaded by Her through and through.

Then, repeat the *phaṭ mantra* and destroy the celestial obstacles as well as those from the middle space (*antarīkṣa*); strike the ground thrice with the left heel and thus destroy the earthly obstacles. Then touching the left branch on the left side of the *choukāt*, put the right foot forward and enter into the *maṇḍapa*. Then install the *śānti-kumbha* (the peace jar) and offer the ordinary *arghya* (*sāmānyārgha*). Next worship the Vāstunātha and Padmayoni with flowers, *ātapa* rice and the *arghya* water on the southwest and then purify *pañcha-gavya*. Next sprinkle all the *maṇḍapa* and the entrance gate with that *arghya* water. And while sprinkling with *arghya* water, consider the whole space right through as inspired with the presence of the Devī, repeat the *mūla-mantra* with devotion and sprinkle with *phaṭ mantra*. The *kartā* then, uttering the *mantra phaṭ,* is to drive away all the evils from the *maṇḍapa* and uttering the *mantra* ***hūm*** sprinkle water all around, thus pacifying the atmosphere and bringing peace into the hearts of all present.

Then burn the *dhūpa* incense inside and scatter *vikira* (water, sandalwood paste, *yava*, ashes, *darba* grass with roots, and *ātapa* rice). Then collect all these again with a broom made of *kuśa* grass to the northeast corner of the *maṇḍapa*, making the *saṅkalpa* and uttering *svasti-vāchana* (invocation of good), distribute and satisfy the poor and orphans with food, clothing and money. Then he should bow down to his own *guru* and take his seat

humbly on the soft *āsanam* allotted to him, with his face eastwards and meditate on the Deity (*īsta-deva*) of the *mantra* that is to be imparted to the disciple. After meditating thus, he is to do the *bhūta-śūddhi* (purification of elements) and perform *nyāsa*, etc., of the *deya-mantra* (the *mantra* that is to be imparted to the disciple) according to the rules stated below, i.e., the Ṛṣi on the head; the *chhanda* in the mouth, the *īṣṭa-devatā* in the heart, *bīja* on the anus and Śakti-nyāsa on the two legs. Then he is to make sound thrice by the clap of his palm and thus thwart off all the evils of the earth and the middle space, and then make *digbandhan* (tying up the quarters) by the *chhotikā-mudrā* three times, snapping the thumb and forefinger together.

Then perform *prāṇāyāma* with the *mūla-mantra* of the would-be-*īsta- devatā* and do the *mātṛkā-nyāsa* on one's own body, thus:

Āūm̐ am namaḥ śirasi
Āūm̐ ām namaḥ on the face
Āūm̐ im namaḥ on the right eye
Āūm̐ īm namaḥ on the left eye

and so on, assigning all the letters duly to their respective places. Then perform the *karānga-nyāsa* on the fingers and the *sadaṅga-nyāsa* thus:

Āūm̐ hridayāya namaḥ, touching on the heart
Āūm̐ śirase svāhā, touching the head
Āūm̐ śikhāyai vasat, touching the tuft (*śikhā*)
Āūm̐ kavachāya hūm, touching the *kavaca*
Āūm̐ netratrayāya vausat, touching the eye
Āūm̐ astrāya phaṭ touching both the sides of the hand, the palm and its back.

Then finish the Nayāsa by doing the *varṇa-nyāsa* of the *mūla-mantra* in those places that are said in the cognate *kalpas* (i.e., throat, heart, arms, legs, etc.).

O Nārada! Next consider within your body the seat of an auspicious *āsana* (a seat) and make the *nyāsa* of *dharma* on the right side, *jñāṇam* on the left side, of *vairāgyam* (dispassion) on the left thigh, prosperity and wealth on the right thigh, of non-*dharma* in the mouth and of non-*jñāṇam* on the left

side, *avairāgyam* (passion) on the navel, and poverty on the right side. Then think of the feet of the *āsana* (the body) as *dharma*, etc., and all the limbs as *adharma* (non-*dharma*). In the middle of the *āsana* (body), i.e., in the heart consider Ananta Deva as a gentle bed, and on that a pure lotus representing this universe of five elements. Then make *nyāsa* of the Sun, Moon, and Fire on this lotus and think the Sun as composed of twelve *kalās* (digits) the Moon composed of sixteen *kalās* (digits) and the Fire as composed of ten *kalās*. Over this make *nyāsa* of *sāttva, rājas* and *tamo-guṇas, ātmā*, Antarātmā, Paramātmā and Jñānātmā and then think of this as his *īṣṭa's* altar where the devotee is to meditate on his *īṣṭa-devatā*, the highest Mother. *Nyāsa*-assignment of the various parts of the body to different Deities which is usually accompanied with prayers and corresponding *mudrās*. Next the devotee is to perform the mental worship of the *deya-mantra* Devatā according to the rules of his own *kalpa;* next he is to show all the *mudrās* stated in the *Kalpa* for the satisfaction of the Deva. The Devas become very pleased when all these *mudrās* are shown to them.

42-46. O Nārada! Now, on one's left side, erect an hectagon; inside it a circular figure; inside this again a square, and then draw within that square a triangle and over it show the *śankha-mudrā*. After finishing the *pūjā* of the six Deities at the six corners of the hectagon—Fire, etc.—take the tripod of the *śankha* (conchshell) and sprinkling it with *phaṭ mantra*, place it within the triangle. Utter, then, the *mantra* ***mam vahniman dalāya daśa kalātmane amuka devyā arghyapātrasthānāya namaḥ*** and thus worshipping the *śānkhya* vessel, place it within the *maṇḍala*. Then worship in the *śankha-pātra*, the ten *kalās* of Fire, beginning from the east, then southeast and so on. Sprinkle the *śankha* (conchshell) with the *mūla-mantra* and meditating on it, place the *śankha* (conchshell) on the tripod. Repeating the *mantra* ***am sūrya maṇḍalāya dvadaśakalātmane amukodevyā arghyapātrāya namaḥ,*** worship in the *arghyapātra-śankha*, sprinkle water in the *śankha* with the *mantra* ***sam śankhya namaḥ***. Worship in due order the twelve *kalās* of the Sun—Tapinī, Tāpinī, Dhūmrā, etc.—utter the fifty syllables of the *māṭṛkā* in an inverse order, beginning with *kṣam, ham, sam, ṣam, śam* etc. (see the *Sāradā Tilaka*) and repeating the *mūla-mantra* also in an inverse order, fill the

śankha three-fourths, with water. Next perform in it the *nyāsa* of Chandrakalā and uttering the *mantra* ***um soma maṇḍalāya sodaśakalātmane amukademtāyā arghyā-mṛtāya namaḥ***, worship in this conchshell. Next with *ankuśa-mudrā*, invoke all the *tīrthas* there, repeating the *mantra* ***gaṅge ca yamune caiva godāvarī sarasvatī* | *narmade sindhu kāverī jale-smin sannidhiṁ kuru*** || and repeat eight times the *mūla-mantra*. Then perform the *śadaṅga-nyāsa* in the water and with the *mantra* ***hṛdā namaḥ***, etc., worship and, repeating eight times the *mūla-mantra*, cover it with *matsya-mudrā*. Next place on the right side of the *śankha*, the *proksanī-pātra* (the *kośā* vessel from which water is taken for sprinkling) and put a little water in it. By this water sprinkle and purify all the articles of worship as well as one's own body, and consider one's *ātman* as pure and holy.

47-81. After doing works thus far the until *viśesārghya* is placed, the devotee should erect *sarvato-bhadra maṇḍala* within the altar and put the *śāli* rice within its pericarp. Next spread *kuśa* grass on that *maṇḍala* and put on one *kurcha*, looking well and auspicious within it, made of twenty-seven *kuśa* grass knotted with *venyagra-granthi*. Worship here the Ādhāra-Śakti, Prakṛti, Kūrma, Śesa, Kṣamā, Sudhāsindhu, Maṇimaṇḍala, Kalpa-vṛkṣa, *īṣṭa-devatā* and the *pītha* (*durgā-devī yoga pīthāya namaḥ*). Then have an entire *kumbha* (waterjar) having no defect, wash it inside with *phaṭ mantra*, and encircle it with red thread thrice, symbolising the three *guṇas*. Place within this jar the *nava-ratna* (nine jewels) with *kurcha,* and worshipping it with scents and flowers, put them in the jar repeating the *praṇava*, and place that on the *pītha* (seat). Next consider the *pītha* and *kumbha* (waterjar) as one and the same and pour waters from the *tīrthas*, repeating in an inverse order the *mātṛkā-varṇas* (from *kṣa* to *ka*) and fill it, thinking of the *īṣṭa-deva* and repeating the *mūla-mantra*, put the new and fresh twigs (*pallavas*) of *aśvattha*, *panasa* and mango trees, etc., in the jar, cover its mouth and place over it fruits, rice, and *chasaka* (honey) and wrap it with two red cloths. Then perform the *prāṇa-pratisthā* and invoke the spirit of the Devī by the *prāṇasthāpana-mantra* and show the *mudrās āvāhana*, etc., and thus satisfy

the Devī. Then do the *sodaśopachāra-pūjā* of the Devī after meditating on the Parameśvarī according to the rules of the *kalpa*.

First offer "welcome" in front of the Devī and then duly offer the *pādya, arghya, ācamanaīya* water, *madhuparka*, oils, etc., for the bath. Then offer nice red silken clothes and various jewels, ornaments; repeating the *mātṛkā* syllables charged with the *deya-mantra*, worship the whole body of the Devī with scents and flowers. Next offer to the Devī the sweet scent of *kalāguru* mixed with camphor and *kāśmīri* sandalwood paste mixed with *kastūrī* and various nice-scented flowers, for example, *kuṇḍa* flowers, etc. Then offer *dhūpa* prepared from *aguru, guggula, uśīra*, sandalwood paste, sugar and honey, and know that the *dhūpa* is very pleasing to the Devī.

Next offer various lights and offerings of fruits, vegetables and food. Be particular to sprinkle everything with the water of the *kosā*, thus purifying, before it is offered to the Devī. Then complete the *aṅga-pūjā* and the *āvarana-pūjā* of the Devī, then perform the duty of Vaiśvadeva. On the right side of the Devī erect an altar (*sthandila*) six feet square and install Agṇi (fire) there. Invoke there the Deity, thinking of Her form and worship Her with scents and flowers. Then with the *vyāhṛti-mantra* with *svāhā* prefixed and *mūla* (*deya*) *mantra* perform the *homa* ceremony with oblations, *charu* and ghee, twenty-five times. Next perform *homa* again with *vyāhṛti*. Next worship the Devī with scents, etc., and consider the Devī and the *pītha-devatā* as one and the same. Then take leave of (*visarjana*) the Agṇi (fire). Offer *balis* (sacrifices) all round to the *pārśvadas* of the Devī with the remnant *charu* of the *homa*.

Now again worship the Devī with five offerings and offer betel, umbrella, *chāmara* and others and repeat the *mūla-mantra* a thousand times. After finishing the *japam*, place a *karkarī* (a water-jar with small holes at the bottom, as in a sieve) on the rice in the northeastern corner, invoke the Devī there and worship Her. Uttering the *mantra* ***rakṣa-rakṣa*** moisten the place with water coming out of the *karkarī*, and repeat the *phaṭ mantra*. After again worshipping the Devī, place the *karkarī* in its position. Thus the *guru*

finishes the *adhivāsa* (foregoing) ceremony, takes his meal with the disciple and sleeps that night on that altar.

82-106. O Nārada! Now I am describing briefly about the *homa-kuṇḍa* (a round hole in the ground consecrated to the Deity) and the *saṁskāra* ceremony of the *sthandila* (sacrificial altar). Uttering first the *mūla-mantra*, fix your gaze on the *kuṇḍa;* then sprinkle it with water and the *phaṭ mantra* and drive away the evil spirits from there. Then with the *mantra* ***hūm*** again sprinkle it with water. Then draw within it three lines *prāgagra* and *udagagra* (on the eastern and northern sides). Sprinkling it with water and the *praṇava*, worship within the *pītha*, uttering the mantras from *ādhāra śaktaye namaḥ* to *amukha devī yoga pīthāya namaḥ*. Invoke in that *pītha* the highest One, Who is Śiva-Śivā with all oneness of heart, and worship Her with scents and offerings. Then think for a moment the Devī as having taken bath and as one with Śaṅkara. Bring then fire in a vessel, and taking a flaming piece thereof, throw that in the southwest corner. Then purifying it by the gaze and quitting the portions of *kravyādah*, impart the *chaitanya* by *ram*, the *vahnivīja* repeat *Āūṁ* over it seven times. Show, then, the *dhenu-mudrā* and protect it by *phaṭ-kāra* and cover, veil it with the *mantra* ***hūm.*** Then turn the fire, thus worshipped with sandalwood paste, etc., thrice over the *kuṇḍa* and with both the knees on the ground and repeating the *praṇava*, consider the Agṇi as the *vīrya* of Śiva and throw it on the *yoni* of the Devī in the *pītha*. Then offer *ācamana*, etc., to the Deva and the Devī and worship. Then light the flame with the *mantra* ***cit piṅgala hana hana daha daha pacha pacha sarvajñā jñāpaya svāhā***. Then utter the *stotra* to Agṇi Deva with great love, repeating the *mantra* ***agṇim prajbalitam vande jātavedam hutāśanam suvarṇa varṇamamalam samiddham visvatomukham***. Then perform the *sadaṅganyāsa* to Agṇi Deva:

Āūṁ̊ sahasrārchchise namaḥ
Āūṁ̊ svasti pūrnāya svāhā
Āūṁ̊ uttistha purusāya vasat
Āūṁ̊ dhūma vyāpine hūm

Āūm̊ sapta jihvāya vausat
Āūm̊ dhanur dharāya phaṭ

Repeating the above six *mantras*, perform the *nyāsa* on the heart, etc., the six places. Now meditate on the Agṇi as of a golden color, three-eyed, seated on a lotus and holding in His four hands signs of granting boons, Śakti, Svastika and sign of 'no fear'; also meditate on Agṇi as the seat of the greatest auspiciousness. Then moisten the *kuṇḍa* on the top of the belt (*mekhalā*) with water. Next spread *kuśa* grass all around and draw the Agṇi-*yantra* over it, i.e., triangle, hectagon, circle, eight-petalled figure and *bhūpura;* rather have this drawing before the *agṇi-sthāpanā*. Now meditate on this only. Then within the yantra, recite ***vaiśvānara jātaveda lohitāksa sarvakarmāni sādhaya svāhā*** and worship Agṇi. Then worship in the center, and in the hectagon at the corners; worship the *saptajihvā* (the seven tongues Hiraṅya, Gaganā, Raktā, Krisnā, Suprabhā, Bahurūpā, Atiraktikā) and next worship within the pericarp of the lotus the Aṅga-Devatās. Then recite the following *mantras* within the eight petals:

Āūm̊ agnaye jātavedase namaḥ
Āūm̊ agnaye saptajihvāya namaḥ
Āūm̊ agnaye havyavāhanāya namaḥ
Āūm̊ agnaye aśvodarajāya namaḥ
Āūm̊ agnaye vaiśvānarāya namaḥ
Āūm̊ agnaye kaumāra tejase namaḥ
Āūm̊ agnaye viśvamukhāya namaḥ
Āūm̊ agnaye devamukhāya namaḥ

and considering the forms to hold Śakti and Svastik, worship them. Then consider Indra and the other Lokapālas (Regents of the several quarters) situated in the east, southeast, and so on together with their weapons, the thunderbolt and the other weapons, and thus worship them.

107-134. O Nārada! Next purify the sacrificial ladles, etc., *śruk, śruva*, etc., and ghee; then, taking ghee by the *śruva*, go on with the *homa* ceremony. Divide the ghee of the *ājyasthālī* (the vessel in which the ghee for the *homa*

purposes is kept) in three parts; take ghee from the right side and saying *Āūṁ agnaye svāhā* offer oblations on the right eye of the Agṇi; take ghee from the left side and saying *Āūṁ somāye svāhā* offer oblations on the left eye of the Agṇi; take ghee from the center and saying, *Āūṁ agṇisomābhyām svāhā*, offer oblations on the central eye of the Agṇi. Take ghee again from the right side and saying *Āūṁ agnaye svistakrite svāhā* offer oblations to the mouth of Agṇi. Then the devotee is to repeat *Āūṁ bhuḥ svāhā, Āūṁ bhuvaḥ svāhā, Āūṁ svaḥ svāhā,* and offer thrice the oblations; next he is to offer oblations thrice with the Agṇi *mantra*. After this, O Muni! for impregnation and each of the ten *saṁskāras*—natal-ceremony, tonsure, etc.—he is to repeat the *praṇava-mantra* and offer eight oblations of ghee on each occasion. Now hear of the tenfold *saṁskāras:* (1) impregnation, (2) *pumsavan* (a ceremony performed as soon as a woman perceives the foetus to be quick), (3) *sīmantonnayana* (a ceremony observed by women in the fourth, sixth or the eighth month of pregnancy), (4) *jāta-karma* (ceremony at the birth of a child), (5) *nāmakarana* (naming the child), (6) *niskrāmana* (a ceremony performed when a newborn child is first taken out of the house into the open air, usually in the fourth month), (7) *annaprāśana* (when rice is put in the mouth of the child), (8) *chūdākarana* (the ceremony of the first tonsure), (9) *upanayana* (holding the sacrificial thread; (10) *godāna* and *udvāha* (gift of cows and marriage). These are stated in the *Vedas*.

Next worship Śiva and Pārvatī, the Father and the Mother of Agṇi, and take leave of Them. Next in the name of Agṇi, offer five *samidhas* (fuel) soaked in ghee and offer one oblation of ghee to each of the *āvarana-devatās*.

Then take the ghee by the *śruk* and covering it with the *śruva*, offer ten oblations to Agṇi and Mahā-Gaṇeśa with *mantras* ending in *vausat*. The Mahā-Gaṇeśa *mantras* run as follows: (1) *Āūṁ, Āūṁ Svāhā* (2) *Āūṁ Śrīṁ Svāhā*, (3) *Āūṁ Śrīṁ Hṛīṁ Svāhā*, (4) *Āūṁ Śrīṁ Hṛīṁ Klīṁ Svāhā*, (5) *Āūṁ Śrīṁ Hṛīṁ Klīṁ Glaum Svāhā*, (6) *Āūṁ Śrīṁ Hṛīṁ Klīṁ Glaum Gam Svāhā*, (7) *Āūṁ Śrīṁ Hṛīṁ Klīṁ Glaum ityantah Gam Ganapataye Svāhā*, (8) *Āūṁ Vara Varada ityantah Svāhā*, (9) *Sarvajanam me Vaśam ityanto Svāhā* and (10) *ānaya svāhā ityantah*.

Next perform in the Agṇi the *pītha-pūjā* and meditate on the *deya-īṣṭadeva* and worship him. Next offer twenty-five oblations to his face, repeating the *mūla-mantra*. Then think of that and Agṇi Deva as one and the same, and then again as one with *ātman*. Then offer oblations to each of the *sadaṅga-devatās* separately. Then search for the *nādis* of *vahni* and *īṣṭa-devatā* and offer twenty-one oblations. Then offer oblations to each of the two Devatās separately. Next offer one thousand eight oblations to the *īṣṭa-deva* with *til* soaked in ghee or with the materials enumerated in the *kalpa*. O Muni! Thus finishing the *homa* ceremony, consider that the *īṣṭa-deva* (the Devī), Agṇi and the *āvarana* Deities are all satisfied. Then, by the command of the *guru*, the disciple is to take his bath and perform his *sandhyā*, etc., and put on new clothes (cloth and *chādar*) and golden ornaments. He is to come then to the *kuṇḍa* with *kāmaṇḍalū* in his hand with a pure heart. He is to bow down to the elders and superiors seated in the assembly and take his seat on his *āsana*. Śrī Gurudeva then would look at the disciple with kind eyes and think the *chaitanya* of the disciple within his own (the *guru's*) body. Then the Gurudeva would perform the *homa* and look at the disciple with a divine gaze, so that the disciple becomes pure-hearted and able to get the favors of the Devas. Thus the *guru* must purify all the *adhvas* (the passages) of the body of the disciple.

Then the *guru* is to touch respectively the feet, generative organ, navel, heart, forehead, and the head of the disciple with *kūrcha* (a bundle of *kuśa* grass) and *til* soaked in ghee, in his left hand offer at each touch eight oblations, repeating the mantra ***Āūm̐ adya siśyasya kalādhvānam śodhayāmi svāhā***, etc." Thus the *guru* would purify *kalādhva* (in the feet) *tattvādhva* (in the generative organ), *bhūvanādhva* (in the navel), *varnādhva* (in the heart), *padādhva* (in the forehead) and *mantrādhva* (on the head), the six *adhvās* and think these all to be dissolved in Brahman (*brahmalīna*).

135-155. Then, again, the *guru* would think all these to be reborn from Brahman and transfer the *chaitanya* of the disciple that was in him to the disciple. Then the guru must offer *pūrnāhuti* and consider the *īṣṭa-devatā*, placed in the fire by the *visarjana-mantra* for the *homa* purposes, as entered

into the water jar. He is to perform again the *vyāhṛti-homa* and offer all the *angāhutis* (oblations to all the limbs) of the fire, and take leave of the fire withdrawing the Deity from the jar into his own body. Uttering then the *vausat mantra* he would tie the eyes of the disciple with a piece of cloth and would bring him from the kuṇḍa to the *maṇḍala* and make the disciple offer *puspānjali* (flowers in his palm) to the *īṣṭa-deva*. Then he would take away the bandage or piece of cloth from his eyes and ask him to take his seat in the seat *kusāsana*. Thus the *guru*, after having purified the elements of the body of the disciple and performed the *nyāsa* of the *deya-mantra*, would make the disciple sit in another *maṇḍala*. Then he would touch the head of the disciple with the twigs (*pallavas*) of the kuṇḍa and repeat the *mātṛkā-mantra* and make him have his bath with the water of the jar which is considered as the seat of the *īṣṭa-deva*. Then, for the protection of the disciple, he would sprinkle (*abhiṣeka*) him with the water of the *vardhani* vessel placed already in the northeast corner. Then the disciple would get up and put on new cloths, besmear his whole body with ashes and sit close by the *guru*. When the merciful *guru* would consider that Śiva-Śakti has now passed out of his own body and that divine force, the Devī, has entered into the body of the disciple, i.e., charged the disciple with the pass. Thinking now the disciple and the Devatā to be one and the same, the *guru* would now worship the disciple with flowers and scents. The *guru* would then place his right hand on the head of the disciple and repeat clearly in his right ear the *mahā-mantra* of the Mahā-Devī . The disciple is to repeat also the *mahā-mantra* 108 times and fall prostrate on the ground before the *guru* and thus bow down to the *guru*, whom the disciple now thinks as the incarnation of the Deva.

The disciple, the devotee of the *guru*, would now give as a *dakśiṇā* all his wealth and property for his whole life to the *guru*. Then he would give *dakśiṇā* to the priests and make charities to the virgins, the Brāhmaṇas, the poor and the destitute and the orphans. Here he is not to be miserly in any way in the expenditure.

O Nārada! Thus the disciple would consider himself blessed and he would daily remain engaged in repeating the *mahā-mantra*. Thus I have described to you above the most excellent *dīkṣā*. Thinking of all these, you are to remain ever engaged in worshipping the lotus feet of the great Devī. There is no *dharma* higher than this in this world for the Brāhmaṇas. The followers of the *Vedas* would impart this *mantra* according to the rules stated respectively in their own *gṛhya-sūtras;* and the *Tāntrikas* would also do the same according to their own *Tantras*. The *Vaidiks* should not follow the *Tantra* rules and the *Tantriks* are not to follow the *Vaidik* rules. Thus all the *śāstras* say. And this is the *Sanātana* creed.

Nārāyaṇa said: "O Nārada! I have described all about the ordinary *dīkṣā* that you questioned me. Now the essence in brief is this that you would remain always merged in worshipping the Parā-Śakti, the highest force, the Mahā-Devī. What more shall I say than this: I have got the highest pleasure and *nirvāṇa*, the peace that passeth all understanding, from my daily worshipping those lotus feet duly."

Vedavyāsa said: "O Mahārāja! O Janamejayan! After having said this *dīkṣā-tattva*, the highest *yogī* Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa meditated on by the *yogīs*, closed his eyes and remained merged in *samādhi*, in the meditation of the lotus feet of the Devī.

Knowing this highest *tattva*, Nārada, the chief of the Ṛṣis, bowed down at the feet of the great *guru* Nārāyaṇa and went away immediately to perform *tapasyā* so that he also might see the Mahā-Devī.

Here ends the Seventh Chapter of the Twelfth Skandha on the Dīkṣā vidhi or on the rules of Initiation in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VIII—Appearance of the Highest Śakti

1-8. Janamejaya spoke to Vedavyāsa: "O Bhagavān! Thou art the knower of all the *dharmas* and Thou art the chief, the crown of the Paṇḍitas, knowing

all the *śāstras*. Now I ask Thee, how is it that the twice-born have ceased to worship the highest Śakti, the Gāyatrī, and they now worship other Devatās, on the face of the distinct command in the *śrutis* that the worship of the Gāyatrī is *nityā*, that is, daily to be done at all times, especially during the three *sandhyā* times, by all those who are twice-born?

In this world some are the devotees of Viṣṇu, some, the followers of Gaṇapati, some are Kāpālikas, some follow the doctrines prevalent in China; some are the followers of Buddha or Chārvāka; some of them again wear the barks of trees and others roam naked. So various persons are seen having no trace of faith in the *Vedas*.

O Brāhmaṇa! What is the real cause underlying secretly here in this! Kindly mention this to me. Again there are seen many men, well-versed in various metaphysics and logic, our graduates and post-graduates but then again, they have no faith in the *Vedas*. How is this? Nobody wants anything ominous to him consciously. But how is it that these so-called learned men are fully aware, and yet they are wonderfully void of any trace of faith in the *Vedas?* Kindly mention the cause underlying this, O Thou! the foremost of the knowers of the *Vedas.*

There is, again, another question: Thou hadst described before the glories of Maṇidvīpa, the highest and the best place of the Devī. Now I want to hear how is that *dvīpa,* greater than the great. Satisfy this servant of thine by describing these. If the *guru* be pleased, he reveals even the greatest and the highest esoteric secret to his disciple."

9-10. Sūta spoke: "Hearing the words of the King Janamejaya, Bhagavān Vedavyāsa began to answer the questions in due order. The hearing of this increases the faith of the twice-born in the *Vedas.*"

11-30. Vyāsa said: :Well has this been asked by you, O King! in due time and in an appropriate moment. You are intelligent, and it seems that you have got the faith in the *Vedas*. I now answer. Listen.

In ancient days, the Asuras, maddened with pride, fought against the Devas for one hundred years. The war was very extraordinary and remarkable. In this great war various weapons were used, variegated with numerous Māyās or ingenious devices. It tended to destroy the whole world. By the mercy of the highest and the most exalted Śakti, the Daityas were overcome by the Devas in that great war. And they quit the heavens and the earth, and went to the nether regions, the Pātāla. The Devas were all delighted and began to dwell on their own prowesses and became proud. They began to say: 'Why shall not victory be ours. Why are not our glories great? We are by far the best! Where are the Daityas? They are devils, powerless. We are the causes of creation, preservation and destruction. We all are glorious! Oh! What can be said before us in favor of the Asuras, the devils?' Thus, not knowing the highest Śakti, the Devas were deluded. At this moment, seeing this plight of the Devas, the World Mother took pity on the Devas and, to favor them, O King! She appeared before them in the form of the most worshipable, great holy Light. It was resplendent like ten million Suns, and cool as well like ten million Moons. It was brilliant and dazzling like ten million lightning flashes, without hands and feet, and exceedingly beautiful! Never was this witnessed before!

Seeing this extraordinary beautiful lovely Light, the Devas were taken aback; they spoke amongst themselves thus: 'What is this! What is this! Is this the work of the Daityas or some other great *māyā* played by them, or is it the work of another for creating the surprise of the Devas?' O King! Then they all assembled together and decided to approach towards that adorable Light and to ask It what It was. They then would determine its strength and decide what to do afterwards.

Thus, coming to this ultimate conclusion, Indra called Agṇi and said: 'O Agṇi! You are the mouthpiece of the Devas. Therefore do you go first and ascertain distinctly what this Light is.' Hearing thus the words of Indra, Agṇi, elated by his own prowess, set out immediately from the place and went to that Light. Seeing Agṇi coming, the Light addressed him thus:

'Who are you? What is your strength? State this before Me.' At this Agṇi replied: 'I am Agṇi. All the *yajñās* ordained in the *Vedas* are performed through me. The power of burning everything in this universe resides in me.' Then that adorable Light took up a straw of grass and said: 'O Agṇi! If you can burn everything in this universe, then do you burn this trifling straw.' Agṇi tried his best to burn the straw, but he could not burn it. He got ashamed and quickly went back to the Devas. Asked by the Devas, Agṇi told them everything and said: 'O Devas! Know verily that the pride cherished by us that we are supreme, is entirely false.'

31-50. Indra then asked Vāyu (wind) and said: 'O Vāyu! You are dwelling in this universe, through and through; by your efforts, all are moving; therefore you are the *prāṇa* of all; it is possible that all forces are concentrated within you. Go and ascertain what is this Light. Verily I do not see any other person here than you who can ascertain this great adorable Light.' Hearing these commendable words of Indra, Vāyu felt himself elated and went at once to that Light. Seeing Vāyu, the Light, the Yakṣa, the demigod, the Spirit asked in a gentle language: 'Who are you? What strength is there in you? Speak out all these to me.' At this, Vāyu spoke arrogantly, 'I am Mātarisvan, I am Vāyu; about my strength, I can move anything and I hold everything. It is through the strength of mine, that this universe is, and is alive and brisk with movements and works.' That highest mass of Light then replied: 'O Vāyu! Move this straw that lies before you, and if you cannot, quit your pride and go back to Indra ashamed.' At this Vāyu tried all his might but, alas! He could not move the straw a bit from that place!

Vāyu then gave up his pride and returned to the Devas and spoke to them all about the Yakṣa (a sort of demigod, a ghost): 'O Devas! Our pride is vain; in no way can we be able to ascertain the nature of that Light. It seems that that holy Light, adorable by all, is extraordinary.' Then all the Devas spoke with one voice to Indra:

'When You are the King of the Devas, better go yourself and ascertain the reality of Its nature.' Indra, then, with great pride, went himself to the

Light; the Light, too, began to disappear gradually from the place, and ultimately vanished from Indra's sight. When Indra found that he could not even speak to that Light, he became greatly ashamed and began to conceive of his own nothingness. He thought thus: 'I won't go back to the Devas. What shall I say to them? Never will I disclose to them my inferiority; one is better to die than do this. One's self-honor is the only treasure of the great and honorable. If honor is gone, what use, then, is there in living?' O King! Then Indra, the Lord of Devas, quit his pride and took refuge unto that great Light which exhibited, ere long, such a glorious character. At this moment, a celestial voice was heard from the Heavens: 'O Indra! Go on now and do *japam*, the reciting of the *māyā-bīja mantra*, the basic *mantra* of Māyā. All your troubles will then be over.' Hearing this celestial voice, Indra began to repeat the *māyā-bīja*, the seed-*mantra* of Māyā (***hrīṁ***), with rapt concentration and without any food.

51-61. Then on the ninth lunar day of the month of Chaitra, when the Sun entered the meridian, suddenly there appeared in that place a great mass of Light as was seen before. Indra saw, then, within that mass of Light, a virgin form in full youth. The luster from Her body was like that of ten million rising Suns; and the color was rosy red like a full-blown *javā* flower. On Her forehead was shining the digit of the Moon; Her breasts were full, and, though veiled under the cloth, they looked very beautiful. She was holding a noose and a goad in Her two hands and Her other two hands indicated signs of favor and fearlessness.

Her body was decked with various ornaments, and it looked auspicious and exceedingly lovely; nowhere can be seen a woman beautiful like Her. She was like a *kalpa-vṛkṣa* (celestial tree yielding all desires); she was three-eyed and Her braid of hair was encircled with *mālatī* garlands. She was praised on Her four sides by the four *Vedas* incarnate in their respective forms. The brilliancy of Her teeth shed luster on the ground as if ornamented with *padmarāga* jewels. Her face looked smiling. Her clothing was red and Her body was covered with sandalwood paste. She was the cause of all causes. Oh! She was all full of mercy.

O King Janamejaya! Thus Indra saw, then, Umā Pārvatī Maheśvarī Bhagavatī, and the hairs of his body stood on end with ecstasy. His eyes were filled with tears of love and deep devotion, and he immediately fell prostrate before the feet of the Devī. Indra sang various hymns to Her and praised Her. He became very glad and asked Her, 'O fair One! Art Thou that great mass of Light? If this be, kindly state the cause of Thy appearance.' O King! Hearing this, the Bhagavatī replied:

62-83. 'This My form is Brahman, the cause of all causes, the seat of Māyā, the witness of all, infallible and free from all defects or blemishes. What all the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* try to establish, what ought to be obtained, as declared by all the rules of austerity, and for which the Brāhmaṇas practice *brahmacharyam*, I am That. I have told you about that Brahman, of the nature of the great holy Light. The sages declare that That Brahman is revealed by ***āūṁ*** and ***hṛīṁ***, the two *bījas* (mystic seed-syllables) that are My two first and foremost *mantras* wherein I remain hidden. I create this universe with My two parts (in My two aspects); therefore My *bīja-mantra* is two. *Āūṁ-bīja* is denominated as *sachchidānanda* (everlasting existence, intelligence and bliss) and *hṛīṁ-bīja* is Māyā Prakṛti, the undifferentiated consciousness, made maṇifest. Know, then, That Māyā as the highest Śakti and know Me as that omnipotent Goddess at present revealed before your eyes. As moonlight is not different from the Moon, so this Māyā-Śakti in the state of equilibrium is nondifferent from Me. The powerful one and the power he wields are not different. They are verily one and the same. During *pralaya* (the great period of latency between creations), this Māyā lies latent in Me, without there being any difference. Again at the time of creation, this Māyā appears as the fructification of the *karmas* of the *jīvas*. When this Māyā is potential and exists latent in Me, when Māyā is *antarmukhī*, it is called unmaṇifested and when the Māyā becomes kinetic, when the Māyā is *bahirmukhī*, when She is in an active state, it is said to be maṇifested. There is no origin or beginning of this Māyā. Māyā is of the nature of Brahman in a state of equilibrium. But, during the beginning of the creation, Her form consisting of the several *guṇas* appears, when Māyā is *bahirmukhī*, She becomes *tāmas*, in Her unmaṇifested state. O Indra! For

this reason Her state of abstraction, and becoming introspective, this is Her *antarmukhī* state; it is known as Māyā and Her looking outward is Her *bahirmukhī* state; it is denominated by *tāmas* and the other *guṇas*. From this comes *sāttva* and then *rājas*. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa are of the nature of the three *guṇas*. Brahmā has the *rājo-guṇa* preponderating in Him; in Viṣṇu, the *sāttva-guṇa* preponderates and in Maheśa, the cause of all causes, is said to reside the *tāmo-guṇa*. Brahmā is known as of the gross body; Viṣṇu is known as of the subtle body; Rudra is known as of the causal body, and I am known as *turīya*, transcending the *guṇas*.

This *turīya* form of Mine is called the state of equilibrium of the *guṇas*. It is the inner controller of all. Beyond this there is another state of Mine which is called the formless Brahman. Know, verily, that my forms are two, as they are with or without attributes (*saguṇa* and *nirguṇa*). That which is beyond *māyā* and the *māyik* qualities is called *nirguṇa* (without *prākritik* attributes) and that which is within *māyā* is called *saguṇa*. O Indra! After creating this universe, I enter within that as the inner controller of all, and it is I that impel all the *jīvas* always to their due efforts and actions. Know, verily, that it is I that engage Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra, the causes of the several works of creation, preservation and destruction of this universe. They are performing their functions by My command. Through the terror of Me the wind blows; through my terror, the Sun moves in the sky; through My terror, Indra, Agṇi, and Yama do their respective duties. I am the best, and superior to all. All fear Me. Through My Grace you have obtained victory in the battle. Know, verily, that it is I that make you all dance like inert wooden dolls as My mere instruments. You are merely My functions. I am the integral whole. I give sometimes victory to you and sometimes victory to the Daityas; Yea, I do everything as I will, keeping My independence duly and, according to the *karmas*, justly. Oh! You all have forgotten Me though your pride and sheer nonsense. You have been carried deep into dire delusion by your vain egotism. And know now that to favor you, this My adorable Light has issued suddenly. Henceforth, banish ever from your heart all your vain boastings and idle pratings. Take refuge

wholly unto Me with all your head, heart and soul, unto My *sachchidānanda* Form and be safe.'

84-93. Vyāsa said: "Thus saying, the Mūla-Prakṛti, the Great Devī, the Goddess of the Universe, vanished from their sight. The Devas, on the other hand, began to praise Her then and there, with rapt devotion. Since that day, all the Devas quit their pride and engaged themselves in worshipping the Devī devotedly. They worshipped the Gāyatrī Devī daily during the three *sandhyā* times, performed various *yajñās,* and thus they worshipped Bhagavatī daily. Thus, in the Satya-yuga, everybody engaged themselves in repeating the Gāyatrī *mantra* and worshipped the Goddess indwelling in the *praṇava* and *hṛīṁkāra*. So, see now for yourself, that the worship of Viṣṇu or Śiva or initiation in the Viṣṇu *mantra* or in the Śiva *mantra* are not mentioned anywhere in the *Vedas* as to be done always and forever. They are done for a while and not required any more when the objects are fulfilled; only the worship of Gāyatrī is always compulsory, to be done at all times, as mentioned in the *Vedas*. O King! If a Brāhmaṇa does not worship the Gāyatrī, know then for certain, that in every way he is sure to go down lower and lower. There is no doubt about this. A Brāhmaṇa is not to wait, no never, to do any other thing; he will have all his desires fulfilled if he worships only the Devī Gāyatrī. Bhagavān Manu says that a Brāhmaṇa, whether he does any other thing or not, can be saved if he worships only the Divine Mother Gāyatrī. This worshipping the Gāyatrī is the highest, greatest, and most difficult of all the works in this universe. If any devotee of Śiva or Viṣṇu or of any other Deity worships his desired Deity without repeating the Gāyatrī, he is sure to suffer the torments of hell. But this age of Kālī deludes the people and draws away their minds from reciting this Gāyatrī, save a few of them. O King! For this reason, in the Satya-yuga, all the Brāhmaṇas kept themselves fully engaged in worshipping the Gāyatrī and the lotus feet of the Devī Bhagavatī."

Here ends the Eighth Chapter in the Twelfth Skandha on the appearance of the Highest Śakti in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IX—the Cause of *Śrāddha* in other Devas

1-20. Vyāsa said: "O King Janamejaya! Once on a time, on account of an evil turn of fate (*karma*) of the human beings, Indra did not rain on this earth for fifteen years. Owing to want of rain, the famine appeared horribly; and almost all the beings lost their lives. No one could count in every house the number of dead persons. Out of hunger the people began to eat horses; some began to eat bears and pigs, some began to eat the dead bodies while some others carried on anyhow their lives. The people were so much distressed with hunger that the mother did not refrain from eating her baby child and the husband did not refrain from eating his wife. O King! The Brāhmaṇas then united and after due discussion, came to the conclusion that they would go to the hermit Gautama who would be able to remove their distress. So all of them wanted to go quickly to the hermitage of the Muni Gautama. They began to say: 'We hear that there is no famine in the hermitage of Gautama. Various persons are running there from various quarters.' Thus coming to a conclusion, the Brāhmaṇas went to the Gautama's *āśrama* with their cows, servants and relations. Some went from the east; some from the south; some from the west, and some from the north. Thus from various quarters the people flocked there. Seeing the Brāhmaṇas coming there, the Ṛṣi Gautama bowed down to them, gave them a cordial welcome and served them with seats, etc. When all took their seats and became calm and quiet, Gautama enquired about their welfare and the cause of their arrival. They described everything about the dire famine and their own states and expressed their deep regret. Seeing them very much distressed, the Muni gave them word not to have any fear; he said: 'I am today become blessed by the arrival of the great ascetics and honorable persons like you. I am your servant. You consider all my houses as yours. Be quite comfortable. Bear no uneasiness. When your servant is alive, what fear do your entertain and whom do you fear? When the demerits are transformed into good merits by your mere sight, and when you have blessed my house with the dust of your holy feet, then who is more blessed than me? O Vipras! Kindly perform your *sandhyās* and *japams* and rest here at ease.'

Vyāsa said: "O King Janamejaya! Thus consoling the Brāhmaṇas, the Ṛṣi Gautama began to worship the Gāyatrī Devī with rapt devotional trance. 'O Devī Gāyatrī! Obeisance to Thee! Thou art the great Vidyā, the Mother of the *Vedas*, higher than the highest; Thou art *vyāhṛti* represented by the *mantra* ***Āūṁ bhur bhuvaḥ svaḥ***. O Mother! Thou art the state of equilibrium, i.e., the *turīya;* Thou art the form of *hṛīṁ;* Thou art Svāhā and Svadhā; Thou grantest the desires of the *bhaktas*. Thou art the witness of the three states: *jāgrat* (waking), *svapna* (dreaming) and *suśupti* (deep sleep). Thou art the *turīya* and *sachchidānanda* Brahman. O Devī! Thou resident in the solar orb and appearest as a ruddy girl in the morning, a youthful maiden at noon and a black old woman in the evening. O Devī! Obeisance to Thee! Now show favor on us at this severe famine time when all the beings are well nigh on the way to destruction.'

21-40. Thus praised and worshipped, the World-Mother appeared and gave to the Ṛṣi one vessel (cup) full to the brim by which everyone can be fed and nourished. The Mother told the Muni: 'This full vessel, given by Me to you will yield whatever you wish.' Thus saying, the Devī Gāyatrī, higher than the highest, vanished. Then, according to the wish of the Muni, came out from that cup, mountains of cooked rice, various curries and sweetmeats, lots of grass and fodder, silken clothing, various ornaments and various articles and vessels for sacrificial purposes. In fact whatever the Muni Gautama wished, that came out of the

brimful cup given by the Devī Gāyatrī. Then the Muni Gautama called the other Munis that came there and gave them wealth, grains, clothing, ornaments, the sacrificial ladles and spoons, and cows and buffaloes for sacrificial purposes. The Munis then assembled and performed various *yajñās*. The place all round, then flourished and became so prosperous that it looked like a second heaven. In fact whatever fair and beautiful there exists in the *trilokas*, all came from the brimful cup given by the Devī Gāyatrī. At this time the Munis, with sandalwood paste all over their bodies, and decorated with very bright ornaments looked like the gods and their wives looked like goddesses. Daily *utsavas* began to be held in in the

āśrama of Gautama. Nowhere were seen any diseases or dacoits and there was no fear from any such things. Gradually the *āśrama's* boundary extended to one hundred *yojanas* (400 miles). Hearing this greatness of Gautama, many persons came there from various quarters. And the Muni Gautama, too, gave them words, 'cast away fear' and fed them.

The Devas, on the other hand, became very much satisfied by the various *yajñās* and extolled the Muni's greatness. So much so, that the famous Indra, the Lord of the Devas, came in the midst of the assembly and extolled his greatness, thus: 'This Gautama has fulfilled all our wishes and has verily become a *kalpa-vṛkṣa* (celestial tree yielding all desires). If this man had not done such things in this hard famine time, we would not have got the *haviḥ* offered in sacrifices and the prospect of our lives would have been at stake.'

O King Janamejaya! Thus the Muni Gautama fed and nourished for twelve years all the Munis like his sons and that place came to be recognized as the chief center (headquarters) of Gāyatrī Devī. Even today, all the Munis perform with devotion the *purasacharanams* and worship thrice the Bhagavatī Gāyatrī Devī. Even today the Devī is there seen as a girl in the morning, as a youthful maiden at noon, as an old woman in the evening.

Then once on a time, Nārada, of best conduct, came there playing on his great *vīnā* and singing in tune the highest glories of Gāyatrī, and took his seat in the assembly of the Munis.

41-62. Seeing the tranquil-hearted Nārada coming there, Gautama and the other Munis received him duly and worshipped him with *pādya* and *arghya*. In course of conversation he began to describe the glories of Gautama and said: 'O best of Munis! I have heard from the mouth of Indra, in the assembly of the Devas, your glories as to your supporting and feeding the pure-hearted Munis, and I have come to see you. By the Grace of Śrī Bhagavatī Gāyatrī Devī, you have now become blessed. There is no doubt about this.' Thus saying, the Devaṛṣi Nārada entered into the temple of the

Devī Gāyatrī and with eyes gladdened by love, saw the Devī there and offered due hymns in praise of Her, and then ascended to the Heavens.

Here, on the other hand, the Brāhmaṇas that were fed by Gautama, became jealous at so much honor offered to Gautama, and tried their best so that no further honor be paid to him. They further settled not to stay any longer in his *āśrama*, when the next good harvest season comes. Thus his glories will wane. O King! Some days passed when good rains fell and there was an abundance of crops everywhere and the famine ended. Hearing this, all the Brāhmaṇas united, Alas! O King! to curse Gautama. Oh! Their fathers and mothers are blessed in whom do not arise such feelings of jealousy! This all is the wonderful play of the powerful time; it cannot be expressed by any person. O King! These Brāhmaṇas created, by *māyā*, an aged cow who was to die, and pushed her in the sacrificial hall of the Muni Gautama at the time of the *homa* ceremony. Seeing that cow entering into the enclosure where the *homa* was being performed, Gautama cried out '*Hoom hoom*' when the cow fell there and died. And the other Brāhmaṇas instantly cried out 'Look! Look! The wicked Gautama has killed the cow.' Seeing this inconceivable event, Gautama was greatly nonplussed and, completing his *homa* ceremony, entered into *samādhi* and began to think the cause of it. Then, coming to know that this has been concocted by the *māyā* of the Brāhmaṇas, he became angry like Rudra at the time of dissolution; his eyes were reddened and he cursed the Ṛṣis, thus: 'O vile Brāhmaṇas! When you are ready to cause mischief to me unjustly, then let you be averse to meditate and do the *japam* of the Devī Gāyatrī, the Mother of the *Vedas*. For your this act, never you will be eager to perform any Vedik sacrificial acts or any action concerning thereof. There is no doubt about this. You will be always averse to the *mantra* of Śiva or the *Tantra* of Śiva. You will be always averse to Mūla-Prakṛti Śrī Devī, Her *dhyānam, mantra*, to any conversation regarding Her; to the visiting of Her place or temple, to do worship and other ceremonies to Her, to see the grand festivals of the Devī, to singing the names and glories of the Devī, to sit before the Devī and to adore Her.

63-81. O vile Brāhmaṇas! You will be always averse to see the festivals of Śiva, to worship Śiva, to Rudrākṣa, to the *bel* leaves, and to the holy *bhasma* (ashes). You will be wholly indifferent to practice the right ways of living as presented in the *Vedas* and *Smṛtis*, to preserve your good conduct and to observe the path of knowledge to *advaita-jñāṇam*, to practice restraint of senses and continence, to the daily practices of *sandhyā-vandanam*, to performing the Agṇihotra ceremonies, to the study of the *Vedas* according to one's own *śākhā* or to the daily studies thereof as to teach those things or to give, as gifts, cows, etc., or to perform the *śrāddhas* of the fathers, etc., or to perform *kṛchchra-chāndrāyana* and other penances. O vile Brāhmaṇas! As you are ready to do these mean things, you will have to suffer for this that you will desist from worshipping the most adorable Śrī Bhagavatī Devī and that you will worship the other Devas with faith and devotion and hold on your bodies *śamkha, chakra* and other signs. You will follow the *Kāpālikas, Bauddha-śāstras* and other heretics. You will sell your father, mother, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters and even your wives too!

You will sell the *Vedas*, *tīrthas* and your *dharma*. You will not feel ashamed in any way to sell all these. You will certainly have faith in *Kāpālika* and *Bauddha* opinions, *Pāñcharātras* and *Kāma-śāstras*. O vile Brāhmaṇas! You will not hesitate to go to your mother, daughters or sisters and you will always be licentious with others' wives and spend your time in that. This is not to you only but to the women and men that will come in your families. Let the Gāyatrī Devī be always indignant with you and let you all go in the end to the Andha Kūpa hells, etc.'

Vyāsa said: "O Janamejaya! Thus taking the water symbolising the true rules and laws of creation, and cursing the Brāhmaṇas, the Muni Gautama went hastily to see the Gāyatrī Devī and, on arriving at the temple there bowed down to Her. The Devī, too, became surprised to see their actions. O King! Even today Her lotus face looks similarly astonished!

82-90. Then the Gāyatrī Devī told Gautama with amazement: 'O Gautama! The venom of the snake does not become less if you feed the serpents with milk; so never mind all these things; the *karmas* take their peculiar turns; it

is hard to say when what things will happen. Now be peaceful. Do not be sorry.' Hearing these words of the Devī, Gautama bowed down to Her and went thence to his own *āśrama*.

Here, on the other hand, due to the curse of Gautama the Brāhmaṇas forgot everything of the *Vedas* and the Gāyatrī *mantra*. They then began to look at this event with wonder as unique and extraordinary. All united they afterwards repented and going before Gautama, fell prostrate at his feet. But they could not speak any word out of shame. Only they said frequently: 'Be pleased, be pleased with us.' When all the assembly of the Brāhmaṇas prayed to him for favor and grace, the Muni Gautama took pity on them and replied. 'My word will never turn out false.' You will have to remain in Kumbhīpāka hell up to the time when Śrī Kṛṣṇa will take His incarnation. Then you will be born in the earth in the Kālī age and whatever I have uttered will exactly come unto you. And if you are in earnest to avert my curse then go and worship the Lotus Feet of Śrī Gāyatrī Devī. The is no other remedy.'

91-100. Vyāsa said: "Thus dismissing the Brāhmaṇas, Gautama Muni thought that all these occurred as a result of *prārabdha-karma,* and he became calm and quiet. For this reason, after Śrī Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja ascended to the heavens, when the Kālī age came, those cursed Brāhmaṇas got out of the Kumbhīpāka hell and took their births in this earth as Brāhmaṇas devoid of the three *sandhyās*, devoid of the devotion to Gāyatrī, devoid of faith in the *Vedas*, advocating the heretics' opinion and unwilling to perform Agṇihotra and other religious sacrifices and duties, and they were devoid of Svadhā and Svāhā. They forgot entirely the unmaṇifested Mūla-Prakṛti Bhagavatī. Some of them began to mark on their bodies various heretical signs, e.g., *taptamūdrā*, etc.; some became *Kāpālikas;* some became *Kaulas;* some *Bauddhas,* and some *Jainas*. Many of them, though learned, became lewd and addicted to other's wives and engaged themselves in vain and bad disputations. For these, they will have to go again surely to the Kumbhīpāka hell. So, O King! Worship with your heart and soul Śrī Bhagavatī Parameśvarī Devī. The worship of Viṣṇu or Śiva is not constant

(to be done every day); only the worship of Śakti is to be constantly performed. For this reason whoever does not worship Śakti is sure to fall. Thus I have answered all your questions. Now I shall describe the highest and most beautiful place, Maṇidvīpa of the primal force Bhagavatī, the deliverer from this bondage of world. Listen.”

Here ends the Ninth Chapter of the Twelfth Skandha on the cause of śrāddha in other Devas than the Devī Gāyatrī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter X—Description of Maṇidvīpa

1-20. Vyāsa said: “O King Janamejaya! What is known in the *śrutis* and in the *Subāla Upaniṣad* as the Sarvaloka over the Brahmaloka, that is Maṇidvīpa. Here the Devī resides. This region is superior to all the other regions. Hence it is named Sarvaloka. The Devī built this place of yore according to Her will. In the very beginning, the Devī Mūla-Prakṛti Bhagavatī built this place for Her residence, superior to Kailāśa, Vaikuṇṭha and Goloka. Verily no other place in this universe can stand before it. Hence it is called Maṇidvīpa or Sarvaloka as superior to all the *lokas*. This Maṇidvīpa is situated at the top of all the regions, and resembles an umbrella. Its shadow falls on the *brahmāṇḍa* and destroys the pains and sufferings of this world. Surrounding this Maṇidvīpa exists an ocean called the Sudhā Samudra, many *yojanas* wide and many *yojanas* deep. Many waves arise in it due to winds. Various fishes and conches and other aquatic animals play and here the beach is full of clear sand-like gems. The seashores are kept always cool by the splashes of the waves of water striking the beach. Various ships decked with various nice flags are plying to and fro. Various trees bearing gems are adorning the beach. Across this ocean, there is an iron enclosure, very long and seven *yojanas* wide, very high so as to block the heavens. Within this enclosure wall the military guards skilled in war and furnished with various weapons are running gladly to and fro. There are four gateways or entrances; at every gate there are hundreds of guards and various hosts of the devotees of the Devī.

Whenever any Deva comes to pay a visit to the Jagadīśvarī, their *vāhanas* (carriers) and retinue are stopped here. O King! This place resounds with the chimings of the bells of hundreds of chariots of the Devas and the neighings of their horses and the sounds of their hoofs. The Devas walk here and there with canes in their hands and they are chiding at intervals the attendants of the Devas. This place is so noisy that no one can hear clearly another's word.

Here are seen thousands of houses adorned with trees of gems and jewels and tanks filled with plenty of tasteful good sweet waters. O King! After this there is a second enclosure wall, very big and built of white copper metal (an amalgam of zinc or tin and copper); it is so very high that it almost touches the heavens. It is hundred times more brilliant than the preceding enclosure wall; there are many principal entrance gates and various trees here. What to speak of the trees there, more than this, all the trees that are found in this universe are found there and they bear always flowers, fruits and new leaves! All the quarters are scented with their sweet fragrance.

21-40. O King! Now hear, in brief, the names of some of the trees that are found in abundance there: Panasa, Vakula, Lodhra, Karnikāra, śinśapa, Deodāra, Kānchanāra, mango, Sumeru, Likucha, Hingula, Elā, Labaṅga, Kat fruit tree, Pātala, Muchukuṇḍa, Tāla, Tamāla, Sāla, Kankola, Nāgabhdra, Punnāga, Pīlu, Sālvaka, Karpūra, AśvaKarṇa, HastiKarṇa, Tālaparna, Pomegranate, Ganikā, Bandhujīva, Jamvīra, Kurandaka, Chāmpeya, Bandhujīva, Kanakavṛksa, Kālāguru (usually coiled all over with cobras, very black poisonous snakes), Sandaltree, Datetree,Yūthikā, Tālaparnī, Sugarcane, Ksīra-tree, Khadira, Bhallātaka, Ruchaka, Kutaja, Bel tree and others, the Talasī and Mallikā and other forest plants. The place is interspersed with various forests and gardens. At intervals there are wells, tanks, etc., adding very much to the beauty of the place. Cuckoos are perching on every tree and they are cooing sweetly, the bees are drinking the honey and humming all around, the trees are emitting juices and sweet fragrance all around. The trees are casting nice cool shadows. The trees of

all seasons are seen here; on the tops of these are sitting pigeons, parrots, female birds of the *mayanā* species and other birds of various other species. There are seen rivers flowing at intervals carrying many juicy liquids. Flamingoes, swans, and other aquatic animals are playing in them. The breeze is stealing away the perfume of flowers and carrying it all around. The deer are following this breeze. The wild peacocks are dancing with madness and the whole place looks very nice, lovely and charming.

Next to this Kāmsya enclosure comes the third enclosure wall of copper. It is square shaped and seven *yojanas* high. Within this are forests of *kalpa-vṛksas*, bearing golden leaves and flowers and fruits like gems. Their perfumes spread ten *yojanas* and gladden things all around. The king of the seasons preserves always this place. The king's seat is made of flowers; his umbrella is of flowers; ornaments made of flowers; he drinks the honey of the flowers; and with rolling eyes, he lives here always with his two wives named Madhu Śrī and Mādhava Śrī. The two wives of Spring have their faces always smiling. They play with bunches of flowers. This forest is very pleasant. Oh! The honey of the flowers is seen here in abundance. The perfumes of the full-blown flowers spread to a distance of ten *yojanas*. The Gandharvha musicians live here with their wives.

41-60. The places round this are filled with the beauties of the spring and with the cooing of cuckoos. No doubt this place intensifies the desires of the amorous persons! O King! Next comes the enclosure wall made of lead. Its height is seven *yojanas*. Within this enclosure there is the garden of the *santānaka* tree. The fragrance of its flowers extends to ten *yojanas.* The flowers look like gold and are always in full bloom. Its fruits are very sweet. They seem to be imbued with nectar drops. In this garden resides always the summer season, with his two wives Śukra Śrī and Śuchi Śrī. The inhabitants of this place always remain under trees; otherwise they will be scorched by summer rays. Various *siddhas* and Devas inhabit this place. The female sensualists here get their bodies all anointed with sandalwood paste and all decked with flower garlands and they walk to and fro with fans in

their hands. There is water to be found here, very cool and refreshing. And owing to heat all the people here use this water.

Next to this lead enclosure comes the wall made of brass, the fifth enclosure wall. It is seven *yojanas* high. In the center is situated the garden of Hari Chhandana trees. Its ruler is the Rainy Season. The lightnings are his auburn eyes; the clouds are his armor, the thunder is his voice and the rainbow is his arrow. Surrounded by his hosts he rains incessantly. He has twelve wives: (1) Nabhah Śrī, (2) Nabhasya Śrī, (3) Svarasya, (4) Rasyasālinī, (5) Ambā, (6) Dulā, (7) Niratni, (8) Abhramantī, (9) Megha Yantikā, (10) Varṣayantī, (11) Chivunikā, and (12) Vāridhārā (some say Madamattā). All the trees here are always seen with new leaves and entwined with new creepers. The whole site is covered all over with fresh green leaves and twigs. The rivers here always flow full and the current is strong, indeed! The tanks here are very dirty like the minds of worldly persons attached to worldly things. The devotees of the Devī, the *siddhas* and the Devas and those that consecrated in their lifetimes tanks, wells, and reservoirs for the satisfaction of the Devas dwell here with their wives.

O King! Next to this brass enclosure comes the sixth enclosure wall made of fivefold irons. It is seven *yojanas* high. In the center is situated the garden of *mandāra* trees. This garden is beautified by various creepers, flowers and leaves. The Autumn season lives here with his two wives Īśa-Lakṣmī and Ūrja-Lakṣmī, and he is the ruler. Various *siddha* persons dwell here with their wives, well-clothed. O King! Next to this comes the seventh enclosure wall, seven *yojanas* high and built of silver.

61-80. In the center is situated the garden of *pārijāta* trees. They are filled with bunches of flowers. The fragrance of these *pārijātas* extend up to ten *yojanas* and gladden all the things all around. Those who are the Devī *bhaktas* and who do the works of the Devī are delighted with this fragrance. The *hemanta* (dewy) season is the Regent of this place. He lives here with his two wives Saha Śrī and Sahasya Śrī and his hosts. Those who are of a loving nature are pleased hereby. Those who have become perfect by performing the *vratas* of the Devī live here also.

O King! Next to this silver, there comes the eighth enclosure wall built of molten gold. It is seven *yojanas* high. In the center there is the garden of the *kadamba* tree. The trees are always covered with fruits and flowers, and the honey is coming out always from the trees from all the sides. The devotees of the Devī drink this honey always and feel intense delight; the dewy season is the Regent of this place. He resides here with his two wives Tapaḥ Śrī and Tapasyā Śrī and his various hosts, and enjoys gladly various objects of enjoyments. Those who had made various gifts for the Devī's satisfaction, those great *siddha-puruṣas* live here with their wives and relatives very gladly in various enjoyments.

O King! Next to this golden enclosure well comes the ninth enclosure made of red *kunkum*-like (saffron) *puṣparāga* gems. The ground inside this enclosure, the ditches or the basins for water dug round their roots are all built of *puṣparāga* gems. Next to this wall there are other enclosure walls built of various other gems and jewels; the sites, forests, trees, flowers birds, rivers, tanks, lotuses, *maṇḍapas* (halls) and their pillars are all built respectively of those gems. Only this is to be remembered that those coming nearer and nearer to the center are one *lakh* times more brilliant than the ones receding from them. This is the general rule observed in the construction of these enclosures and the articles contained therein. Here the Regents of the several quarters, the Dikpālas, representing the sum total of the several Dikpālas of every *brahmāṇḍa,* and their guardians reside. On the eastern quarter is situated the Amarāvatī city. Here the high-peaked mountains exist and various trees are seen. Indra, the Lord of the Devas, dwells here. Whatever beauty exists in the separate heavens in the several places, one thousand times, rather more than that, exists in the heaven of this cosmic Indra, the thousand-eyed, here. Here Indra mounting on the elephant Airāvata, with thunderbolt in his hand, lives with Śachī Devī and other immortal ladies, and with the hosts of the Deva forces. On the Agṇi (southeastern) corner is the city of Agṇi. This represents the sum total of the several cities of Agṇi in different *brahmāṇḍas*.

81-100. Here resides the Agṇi Deva very gladly with his two wives Svāhā and Svadhā and with his *vāhana* and the other Devas. On the south is situated the city of Yama, the God of death. Here lives Dharma-Rāja with rod in his hand with Citragupta and several other hosts. On the southwesten corner is the place of the Rākṣasas. Here resides Nirriti with his axe in his hand, with his wife and other Rākṣasas. On the west is the city of Varuṇa. Here Varuṇa-Rāja resides with his wife Vāruṇī and intoxicated with the drink of *vāruṇī* honey; his weapon is the noose, his *vāhana* is the king of fishes, and his subjects are the aquatic animals. On the northwestern corner dwells Vāyudeva. Here Pavana Deva lives with his wife and with the *yogīs* perfect in the practice of *prāṇāyāma*. He holds a flag in his hand. His vāhana is the deer and his family consists of the forty-nine Vāyus. On the north resides the Yakṣas. The corpulent King of the Yakṣas, Kuvera, lives here with his Śaktis Vṛddhi and Ṛddhi, and in possession of various gems and jewels. His generals Maṇibhadra, Purnabhadra, Maṇimān, Maṇikandhara, Maṇibhūsa, Maṇisragvī, Maṇikar-mukadhārī, etc., live here. On the northeastern corner is situated the Rudra-loka, decked with invaluable gems. Here dwells Rudra Deva. On His back is kept the arrow-case and he holds a bow in his left hand. He looks very angry and his eyes are red with anger. There are other Rudras like him with bows and spears and other weapons, surrounding him. The faces of some of them are distorted; some are very horrible indeed! Fire is coming out from the mouths of some others. Some have ten hands; some have a hundred hands and some have a thousand hands; some have ten feet; some have ten heads, whereas some others have three eyes. Those who roam in the intermediate spaces between the heaven and earth, those who move on the earth, or the Rudras mentioned in the Rudrādhyāya all live here.

O King! Īsāna, the Regent of the northeastern quarter lives here with Bhadrakālī and other Mātrigaṇas, with *kotis* and *kotis* of Rudrānīs, Dāmarīs, Vīra Bhadras and various other Śaktis. On his neck there is a garland of skulls, on his hand there is a ring of snakes; he wears a tiger skin; his upper clothing is a tiger skin and his body is smeared with the ashes of the dead. He sounds frequently his *damaru;* this sound reverberates on all sides, he

makes big laughs called *attahāsya*, reverberating through the heavens. He remains always surrounded with Pramathas and Bhūtas; they live here too.”

Here ends the Tenth Chapter of the Twelfth Skandha on the description of Maṇidvīpa in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XI—Enclosure walls of Maṇidvīpa

1-30. Vyāsa said: “O King Janamejaya! Next to this *pusparāga-maṇi* enclosure wall comes the tenth enclosure wall, made of *padmarāga-maṇi*, red like the red *kunkuma* and the rising sun. It is ten *yojanas* high. All its ground, entrance gates and temples and arbours are all made of *padmarāga-maṇi*. Within this reside the sixty-four Kalās or sub-Śaktis adorned with various ornaments and holding weapons in their hands. Each of them has a separate *loka* (region) allotted and within this *loka* they have their own formidable weapons, *vāhanas*, families and their leaders or governors. O King! Now hear the names of the sixty-four Kalās. They are: Piṅgalāksī, Viśālāksī, Samṛddhi, Vṛddhi, Śraddhā, Svāhā, Svadhā, Māyā, Sañgñā, Vasundharā, Trīlokadhātrī, Sāvitrī, Gāyatrī, Tridaśeśvsrī, Surūpā, Bahurūpā, Skandamātā, Achyutapriyā, Vimalā, Amalā, Arunī, Ārunī, Prakṛtī, Vikṛtī, Sṛṣṭī, Sthitī, Samhṛtī, Sandhyā, Mātā, Satī, Hamsī, Mardikā, Vajrikā, Parā, Devamātā, Bhagavatī, Devakī, Kāmalāsanā, Trimukhī, Saptamukhī, Surāsura-vimardinī, Lambosthī, Ūrdhakeśī, Bahusīrsā, Vrikodarī Ratharekhāhvayā, Śaśirekā, Gaganavegā, Pavanavegā, Bhuvanapālā, Madanāturā, Anangā, Anaṅgamathanā, Anaṅgamekhalā, Anaṅgakusumā, Viṣvarūpā, Surādikā, Ksayamkarī, Aksyobhyā, Satyavādinī, Bahurūpā, śuchivratā, Udārā and Vāgiśī. These are the sixty-four Kalās. All of them have got luminous faces and long lolling tongues. Fire is always coming out from the faces of all of them. The eyes of all of them are red with anger. They are uttering: ‘We will drink all the water and thus dry up the oceans; we will annihilate fire, we will stop the flow of air and control it. Today we will devour the whole universe’ and so forth. All

of them have got bows and arrows in their hands; all are eager to fight. The four quarters reverberate with the clashing of their teeth. The hairs on their heads are all tawny and they stand upwards. Each of them has one hundred Aksauhinī forces under them. O King! What more to say than this that each of them has got power to destroy one *lakh brahmāṇḍas;* and their one hundred Aksauhinī forces also can do the same. There is nothing that is not impracticable with them. What they cannot do cannot be conceived by mind nor can be uttered in speech. All the war materials exist within their enclosures. Chariots, horses, elephants, weapons, and forces all are unlimited. All the war materials are ready at all times and in abundance.

Next comes the eleventh enclosure wall built of *gomeda-maṇi*. It is ten *yojanas* high. Its color is like the newly blown *javā* flower. All the ground, trees, tanks, houses, pillars, birds and all other things are all red and built of *gomeda-maṇi*. Here dwell the thirty-two Mahā-Śaktis adorned with various ornaments made of *gomeda-maṇi* and furnished with various weapons. They are always eager to fight. Their eyes are always red with anger; their bees are like *piśāchas* and their hands are like *chakras* (discs). "Pierce him," "Beat him," "Cut him," "Tear him asunder," "Burn him down," are the words constantly uttered by them. The inhabitants of the place always worship them. Each of them has ten Aksauhinī forces. These are inordinately powerful. It is impossible to describe that. It seems that each Śakti can easily destroy one *lakh brahmāṇḍas*. Innumerable chariots, elephants, hordes, etc., and other *vāhanas* are here. Verily all the war materials of the Devī Bhagavatī are seen in this *gomeda-maṇi* enclosure.

31-51. Now I am mentioning the auspicious, sin-destroying names of these Śaktis: Vidyā, Hṛī, Pusti, Prajñā, Sinīvālī, Kuhū, Rudrā, Viryā, Prabhā, Nandā, Posanī, Riddhidā, Śubhā, Kālarātri, Mahārātri, Bhadra Kālī, Kaparddinī, Vikṛti, Daṇḍi, Mundinī, Sendukhandā, śikhandinī, Niśumbha-Śumbha-mathanī, Mahisāsura-marddinī, Indrānī, Rudrānī, Śankarārdha-sarīrinī, Nārī, Nirāyanī-triśūlinī, Pālinī, Ambikā and Hlādinī. (See the *Dakśiṇā Mūrti Samhitā* and other *Tantras*.) Never there is any chance that

they will be defeated anywhere. Hence if all those Śaktis get angry at any time, this *brahmāṇḍa* ceases to exist.

Next to this *gomeda* enclosure comes the enclosure made of diamonds. It is ten *yojanas* high; on all sides there are the entrance gates; the doors are hinged there with nice mechanisms. Nice new diamond trees exist here. All the roads, royal roads, trees, and the spaces for watering their roots, tanks, wells, reservoirs, *sāraṅga* and other musical instruments are all made of diamonds. Here dwells Śrī Bhuvaneśvarī Devī with Her attendants. O King! Each of them has a *lakh* attendants. All of them are proud of their beauty. Some of them are holding fans in their hands; some are holding cups for drinking water; some, betel nuts; some are holding umbrellas; some *chowries;* some are holding various clothings; some flowers; some, looking glasses; some, saffrons; some collyrium, whereas some others are holding *sindūra* (red lead). Some are ready to do the painting works; some are anxious to shampoo the feet; some are eager to make Her wear ornaments; some are anxious to put garlands of flowers on Her neck. All of them are skilled in various arts of enjoyments and they are all young. To gain the Grace of the Devī, they consider the whole universe as trifling.

Now I shall mention to you the names of the attendants of the Devī, proud of their possessing lots of amorous gestures and postures. Listen. They are: Anaṅgarūpā, Anaṅgamadanā, Madanāturā, Bhuvanavegā, Bhuvanapālikā, Sarvaśiśira, Anaṅgavedanā, Anaṅgamekhalā, these are the eight *sakhīs*. Each of them is as fair as Vidyullatā. Each is adorned with various ornaments and skilled in all actions. When they walk to and fro with canes and rods in their hands in the service of the Devī, they look as if the lightning flashes glimmer on all sides.

52-71 On the outer portion of the enclosure wall, on the eight sides are situated the dwelling houses of these eight *sakhīs,* and they are always full of various *vāhanas* and weapons. Next to this enclosure of diamond comes the thirteenth enclosure wall made of *vaidūrya-maṇi*. Its height is ten *yojanas*. There are entrance gates and doorways on the four sides. The court inside, the houses, the big roads, wells, tanks, ponds, rivers and even the

sands are all made of *vaidūrya-maṇi*. On the eight sides reside the eight Mātṛkās, Brāhmī, etc., with their hosts. These Mātṛkās represent the sum total of the individual Mātṛkās in every *brahmāṇḍa*.

Now hear their names: (1) Brāhmī, (2) Māheśvarī, (3) Kaumārī, (4) Vaiṣṇavī, (5) Vārāhī, (6) Indrānī, (7) Chāmundā, and (8) Mahā-Lakṣmī. Their forms are like those of Brahmā and Rudra and others. They are always engaged in doing good to the universe, and reside here with their own *vāhanas* and weapons.

At the four gates, the various *vāhanas* of Bhagavatī remain always fully equipped. Somewhere there are *kotis* and *kotis* of elephants. At some places there are *kotis* and *kotis* of horses; at others there are camps, houses, at others there are swans, lions; at others there are Garuḍas; at other places there are peacocks, bulls and various other beings, all fully equipped and arranged in due order. Similarly the above-mentioned animals are yoked to *kotis* and *kotis* of chariots; there are coachmen; at some places flags are fluttering high on them so as to reach the heavens, and thus they are adding beauty. At other places the aerial cars are arranged in rows, countless, with various-sounding instruments in them, with flags soaring high in the heavens and endowed with various ensigns and emblems. O King! Next to this *vaidūrya* enclosure, comes the fourteenth enclosure wall built of *indra-nīlamaṇi;* its height is ten *yojanas*. The court inside, houses, roads, wells, tanks and reservoirs, etc., all are built of *indra-nīlamaṇi*. There is here a lotus consisting of sixteen petals extending to many *yojanas* in width and shining like a second Sudarśana Chakra. On these sixteen petals reside the sixteen Śaktis of Bhagavatī with their hosts. Now I am mentioning the names of these. Hear: Karālī, Vikārālī, Umā, Sarasvatī, Śrī, Durgā, Ūṣā, Lakṣmī, Śruti, Smṛti, Dhṛti, Śraddhā, Medhā, Mati, Kānti, and Āryā. These are the 16 Śaktis. They all are dark blue, of the color of the fresh rain-cloud; they wield in their hands axes and shields. It seems they are ever eager to fight. O King! These Śaktis are the rulers of all the separate Śaktis of the other *brahmāṇḍas*. These are the forces of Śrī Devī.

72-90. Being strengthened by the Devī's strength, these are always surrounded by various chariots and forces, various other Śaktis follow them. If they like, they can cause great agitation in the whole universe. Had I a thousand faces, I would not be able to describe what an amount of strength they wield.

Now I describe the fifteenth enclosure wall. Listen. Next to this *indra-nīlamaṇi* enclosure, comes the enclosure made of pearls (*muktā*), very wide and ten *yojanas* high. The court inside, its space, trees, all are built of pearls. Within this enclosure there is a lotus with eight petals, all of pearls. On these petals reside the eight Śaktis, the advisers and ministers of the Devī. Their appearances, weapons, dresses, enjoyments, everything is like those of Śrī Devī. Their duty is to inform the Devī of what is going on in the *brahmāṇḍas*. They are skilled in all sciences and arts and clever in all actions. They are very clever, skillful and clever in knowing beforehand the desires and intentions of Śrī Devī, and they perform those things accordingly. Each one of them has many other Śaktis who also live here. By their Jñāṇa-Śakti they know all the news concerning the *jīvas* in every *brahmāṇḍa*. Now I mention the names of those eight Sakhīs. Listen. Anaṅgakusumā, Anaṅgakusumā-turā, Anaṅgamadanā, Anaṅgamadanāturā, Bhuvanapāla, Gaganavegā, Śaśirekhā, and Gaganarekhā. These are the eight Sakhīs. They look red like the rising Sun; and in their four hands they hold noose, goad, and signs of granting boons and "no fear.' At every instant they inform Śrī Devī of all the events of the *brahmāṇḍa*.

Next to this comes the sixteenth enclosure wall made of emerald (*marakata*); it is ten *yojanas* high; the court inside, its space, and houses and everything are built of emeralds (*marakata-maṇi*). Here exist all the good objects of enjoyments. This is hexagonal, of the *yantra* shape. And at every corner reside the Devas. On the eastern corner resides the four-faced Brahmā; he lives with Gāyatrī Devī; he holds *kāmaṇḍalū, mālā*, signs indicating 'no fear' and *daṇḍa* (rod). The Devī Gāyatrī is also decorated with these. Here all the *Vedas, Smṛtis*, *Purāṇas* and various weapons exist, incarnate in their

respective forms. All the *avatāras* of Brahmā, Gāyatrī, and Vyāhritis that exist in this *brahmāṇḍa* all live here. On the southwest corner Mahā-Viṣṇu lives with Sāvitrī; He holds conchshell, disc, club, and lotus. Sāvitrī has got also all these. The *avatāras* of Viṣṇu that exist in every *brahmāṇḍa*—Matsya, Kūrma, etc.—and all the *avatāras* of Sāvitrī that exist in every universe, all dwell in this place. On the northwestern corner exists Mahā-Rudra with Sarasvatī. Both of them hold in their hands *paraśu, mālā*, signs granting boons and 'no fear.'

91-110. All the *avatāras* of Rudra and Pārvatī (Gaurī, etc.) facing south that exist in all the *brahmāṇḍas*, dwell here. All the chief *āgamas*, sixty-four in number and all the other *Tantras* reside here, incarnate in their due forms. On the southeastern corner, the Lord of wealth, Kuvera, of Bhagavatī, surrounded by roads and shops resides here with Mahā-Lakṣmī and his hosts holding the jar of jewels (*maṇi-karandikā*). On the western corner exists always Madana with Rati, holding noose, goad, bow and arrow. All his amorous attendants reside here, incarnate in their forms. On the northeastern corner resides always the great hero Gaṇeśa, the remover of obstacles, holding noose and goad and with his Puṣṭi Devī. O King! All the *vibhūtis* (maṇifestations) of Gaṇeśa that exist in all the universes reside here. What more to say than this, that Brahmā and the other Devas and Devīs here represent the sum total of all the Brahmās and the Devas and the Devīs that exist in all the *brahmāṇḍas*. These all worship Śrī Bhagavatī, remaining in their own spheres respectively.

O King! Next come the seventeenth enclosure wall made of *prabāla*. It is red like saffron and it is one hundred *yojanas* high. As before, the court inside, the ground and the houses all are made of *prabāla*. The Goddesses of the five elements, Hṛllekhā, Gaganā, Raktā, Karālikā and Mahochchhusmā reside here. The colors and lusters of the bodies of the Goddessses resemble those of the elements over which they preside respectively. All of them are proud of their youth and hold in their four hands noose, goad and signs granting boons and 'no fear.' They are dressed like Śrī Devī and reside here always.

Next to this comes the eighteenth enclosure wall built of *navaratna* (the nine jewels). It is many *yojanas* high and wide. This enclosure wall is superior to all others and it is higher also. On the four sides there exist innumerable houses, tanks, reservoirs, all built of *navaratna;* these belong to the Devīs, the presiding Deities of *āmnāyas* (that which is to be studied or learnt by heart; the *Vedas*). The ten Mahā-Vidyās, Kālī, Tārā, etc., of Śrī Devī and the Mahābhedās, that is, all the *avatāras* all dwell here with their respective *āvaranas, vāhanas* and ornaments. All the *avatāras* of Śrī Devī for the killing of the Daityas and for showing favor to the devotees live here. They are Paśamkuśeśvarī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhairavī, Kapāla Bhuvaneśvarī, Amkuśa Bhuvaneśvarī, Pramāda Bhuvaneśvarī, Śrī Krodha Bhuvaneśvarī, Triputāśvārūdhā, Nityaklinnā, Annapurnā, Tvaritā, and the other *avatāras* of Bhuvaneśvarī, and Kālī, Tārā and the other Mahāvidyās. They live here with their *āvarana* Devatās (attendant Deities), *vāhanas* and ornaments respectively. Here live also the seven *kotis* of Devīs presiding over the Mahā-Mantras, all brilliant and fair like *koti* Suns.

O King! Next to this enclosure wall comes the chief and crowning palace of Śrī Devī, built of *chintāmaṇi* gems. All the articles within this are built of *chintāmaṇi* gems. Within this palace are seen hundreds and thousands of pillars. Some of these pillars are built of *sūryakānta-maṇi*, some are built of *chandrakānta-maṇi*, and some are built of *vidyutkānta-maṇi*. O King! The luster and brilliance of these pillars is so strong that no articles within this palace are visible to the eye." (Note: The face of the Goddess Kālī is so bright that it appears like a shadow, i.e., black.)

Here ends the Eleventh Chapter on the description of the enclosure walls built of Padmarāga maṇi, etc., of the Maṇidvīpa in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XII—Description of Maṇidvīpa

1-17. Vyāsa said: "O King Janamejaya! The Ratnagṛha, above mentioned, is the central, the chief and the crowning place of Mūla-Prakṛti. The nine

jewels are: (1) Muktā, (2) Mānikya, (3) Vaidūrya, (4) Gomeda, (5) Vajra, (6) Vidruma, (7) Padmarāga, (8) Marakata, and (9) Nīla. This is situated in the center of all the enclosures. Within this there are the four *maṇḍapas*—halls built of a thousand (i.e., innumerable) pillars. These are the Śṛṇgāra Maṇḍapa, Mukti Maṇḍapa, Jñāṇa Maṇḍapa and Ekānta Maṇḍapa; on the top there are canopies of various colors; within are many articles scented by *dhūpa*, etc. The brilliance of each of these is like that of one *koti* Suns. On all sides of these four *maṇḍapas* there are nice groups of gardens of *kaśmīra, mallikā* and *kuṇḍa* flowers. Various scents and scented articles, for example, musk, etc., are fully arranged in due order. There is a very big lotus tank here; the steps leading to it are built of jewels. Its water is nectar, on it are innumerable full-blown lotuses, and bees are humming always over them. Many birds, swans, *kārandavas*, etc., are swimming to and fro. The sweet scents of lotuses are playing all round. In fact, the whole Maṇidvīpa is perfumed with various scented things. Within the Śṛṇgāra Maṇḍapa, the Devī Bhagavatī is situated in the center on an *āsana* (seat) and She hears the songs sung in tune by the other Devīs along with the other Devas. Similarly sitting on the Mukti Maṇḍapa, She frees the *jīvas* from the bondage of the world. Sitting on the Jñāṇa Maṇḍapa, She gives instructions on Jñāṇa, and sitting on the fourth Ekānta Maṇḍapa, She consults with Her ministers, the Sakhīs, Anaṅga Kusuma, etc., on the creation, preservation, etc., of the universe.

O King! Now I shall describe about Khās, the main room of Śrī Devī. Listen. The Khās Mahāl palace of the Devī Bhagavatī is named Śrī Chintāmaṇi Gṛha. Within this is placed the raised platform, the dais and sofa whereon the Devī taketh Her honorable seat. The ten Śakti-tattvas form the staircases. The four legs are (1) Brahmā, (2) Viṣṇu, (3) Rudra, and (4) Maheśvara. Sadā-Śiva forms the upper covering plank. Over this Śrī Bhuvaneśvara Mahādeva or the Supreme architect of the universe, is reigning. Now hear something about this Bhuvaneśvara. Before creation while intending to sport, the Devī Bhagavatī divided Her body into two parts, and from the right part created Bhuvaneśvara. He has five faces and each face has three eyes. He has four hands and He is holding in each hand

speer, signs indicating 'do not fear,' axe, and signs granting boons. He looks sixteen years old. The luster of of His body is more beautiful then *koti* Kandarpas and more fiery than a thousand Suns; and at the same time cool like *koti* Moons. His color is crystal white, and on His left lap Śrī Bhuvaneśvarī Devī is always sitting.

18-29. On the hip of Śrī Bhuvaneśvarī is shining a girdle with small tinkling bells, built of various jewels; the ornaments on Her arms are made of burnished gold studded with *vaidūrya-maṇis;* the *tātanka* ornaments on Her ears are very beautiful like Śrī Chakra, and they enhance very much the beauty of Her lotus face. The beauty of Her forehead vies with, or defies the Moon of the eighth bright lunar day. Her lips challenge the fully ripened *bimba* fruits. Her face is shining with the *tilaka* mark made of musk and saffron. The divine crown on Her head is beautified with the Sun and Moon made of jewels; the nose ornaments are like Venus, built of transparent gems, looking exceedingly beautiful and shedding charming luster all around. Her neck is decorated with necklaces made of gems and jewels. Her breasts are nicely decorated with camphor and saffron. Her neck is shining like a conchshell decorated with artistic designs. Her teeth look like fully ripe pomegranate fruits. On Her head is shining a jeweled crown. Her lotus face is beautified with *alakā* as if these are mad bees. Her navel is beautiful like the whirls in the river Bhāgirathī; Her fingers are decorated with jewel rings; She has three eyes like lotus leaves; the luster of Her body is bright like *padmarāga-maṇi* cut, carved and sharpened on stone. Her bracelets are adorned with tinkling jewel bells; Her neck ornaments and medals are studded with gems and jewels. Her hands are resplendent with the luster of the jewels on the fingers; the braid of hair on Her head is wreathed with a garland of *mallikā* flowers; Her bodice (short jacket) is studded with various jewels.

30-45. O King! Śrī Devī is slightly bent down with the weight of Her very high hard breasts. She has four hands and She is holding noose, goad and signs granting boons and 'do not fear.' The all-beautiful all-merciful Devī is full of love gestures and beauties. Her voice is sweeter than that of a *vīnā;*

the luster of Her body is like *kotis* and *kotis* of Suns and Moons if they were to rise simultaneously on the sky. Sakhīs, attendants, Devas and the Devīs surround Her on all sides. Ichchā-Śakti, Jñāṇa-Śakti, and Kriya-Śakti all are present always before the Devī. Lajjā, Tuṣṭi, Puṣṭi, Kīrti, Kānti, Kṣamā, Dayā, Buddhi, Medhā, Smṛti, and Lakṣmī are always seen here incarnate in their due forms. The nine Pītha Śaktis—Jayā, Vijayā, Ajitā, Aparājitā, Nityā, Vilāsinī, Dogdhrī, Aghorā, and Maṅgalā—reside here always and are in the service of the Devī Bhuvaneśvarī. On the side of the Devī are the two oceans of treasures; from these streams of *navaratna*, gold, and seven *dhātus* (elements) go out and assume the forms of rivers and fall into the ocean Sudhā Sindhu. Because such a Devī Bhuvaneśvarī, resplendent with all powers and prosperities, sits on the left lap of Bhuvaneśvara, He has, no doubt acquired His omnipotence.

O King! Now I will describe the dimensions of the Chintāmaṇi Gṛha. Listen. It is one thousand *yojanas* wide; its center is very big; the rooms situated further and further are twice those preceding them. It lies in *antarīksa* (the intervening space) without any support. At the times of dissolution and creation it contracts and expands like a cloth. The luster of this Chintāmaṇi Gṛha is comparatively far more bright and beautiful than that of other enclosure walls. Śrī Devī Bhagavatī dwells always in this place. O King! All the great *bhaktas* of the Devī in every *brahmāṇḍa*, in the Devaloka, in Nāgaloka, in the world of men or in any other *loka,* all those that were engaged in the meditation of the Devī in the sacred places of the Devī and died there, they all come here and reside with the Devī in great joy and festivity.

46-59. On all sides rivers are flowing; some of ghee, some of milk, curd, honey, nectar, pomegranate juice, jambu juice, and some of mango juice, sugarcane juices are flowing on all sides. The trees here yield fruits according to one's desires, and the wells and tanks yield water also as people desire. Never is there any want felt here of anything. Never are seen here diseases, sorrow, old age, decrepitude, anxiety, anger, jealousy, and envy and other lower ideas. All the inhabitants of this place are full of

youth and look like one thousand Suns. All enjoy with their wives and they worship Śrī Bhuvaneśvarī. Some have attained sālokya, some sāmīpya, some sārūpya and some have attained *sārṣṭi,* and pass their days in highest comfort. The Devas that are in every *brahmāṇḍa* all live here and worship Śrī Devī. The seven *koti* Mahā-Mantras and Mahā-Vidyās here assume forms and worship the Mahā-Māyā Śrī Bhagavatī, Who is of the nature of Brahman.

O King! Thus I have described to you all about this Maṇidvīpa. The luster of Sun, Moon and *kotis* and *kotis* of lightnings cannot be one *kotieth* of one *koti* part of its luster. At some places the luster is like *Vidruma-maṇi;* some places as are illumined like the luster of *marakata-maṇi;* some, like *sūryakānta-maṇi* and some places are rendered brilliant like *kotis* and *kotis* of lightnings. The light at some places is like *sindūra;* at some places like *Indranīla-maṇi;* at some places, like *mānikya*, and at some places like diamond. Some places are blazing like the conflagration of fire; and some places look like molten gold; some places seem filled with the luster of *chandrakānta-maṇi*, and some places look brilliant like *sūryakānta-maṇi.*

60-73. The mountains here are all built of gems and jewels; the entrance gates and enclosures are built of gems and jewels; the trees and their leaves all are of gems; in fact all that exist here are all of gems and jewels. At some places numbers of peacocks are dancing; at some places cuckoos are captivating the minds of persons by cooing in the fifth *svara,* and at others doves and pigeons and parrots are making sweet cackling sounds. *Lakhs* and *lakhs* of tanks are there with their pure crystal-like waters. The red lotuses have blown fully and enhanced the beauty of the place. The captivating scents of these lotuses extend to a distance one hundred *yojanas* all round, and gladden the minds of people. The leaves are rustling with gentle breezes. The whole sky overhead is radiant with the luster of *chintāmaṇi* gems and jewels. All the sides are illuminated with the brilliancy of the gems and jewels. O King! These jewels act like lamps. And the sweet-scented trees emit their fragrance and it is transmitted by breeze all around. Thus these trees serve the purpose of *dhūpa* (incense). The rays of these

gems pierce through the openings of the jewel screens on the houses and fall on the mirrors inside, thus causing a nice brilliant appearance that captivates the mind and causes confusion.

O King! And what shall I say of this place, more than this, that all the powers, and wealth, all the love sentiments, all the dress suited to amorous meetings, all the splendors, fire, energy, beauty and brilliance, the omniscience, the indomitable strength, all the excellent qualities and all mercy and kindness are present here! The all-comprehending bliss and the *brāhmānanda* can always be witnessed here!

O King! Thus I have described to you about the Maṇidvīpa, the most exalted place of the Devī Bhagavatī. At Her remembrance all sins are instantly destroyed. The more so, if a man remembers the Devī and about this place at the time of death, He surely goes there. O King! He who daily reads the five chapters, i.e., from the eighth to this twelfth chapter of the Twelfth Skanda, is surely untouched by any obstacles due to the *bhūtas, pretas* and *piśāchas*. Especially the recitation of this at the time of building a new house and at the time of *vāstu-yāga* ensures all good and auspiciousness."

Here ends the Twelfth Chapter of the Twelfth Skandha on the description of Maṇidvīpa in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIII—Janamejaya's Devī-yajñā

1-4. Vyāsa said: "O King Janamejaya! Thus I have answered all your nice queries; and what Nārāyaṇa spoke to the high-souled Nārada is also said by me. He who hears this greatly wonderful *Purāṇam, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam,* certainly becomes dear to the Devī, and all his actions become fructified with success. Now as regards your mental distress, how you prevent any evil falling to your late father in his future life, I advise you to do a *yajñā* in the name of Bhagavatī; and certainly your father will be saved. And you also better take the most excellent *mantra* of the Mahā-Devī

duly, according to rules; and your human life will then be crowned with success. Your life will be saved; thus you as well as your father will be saved."

5-12. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! Hearing thus, the King asked Vyāsadeva to initiate him in the great Devī-*mantra*, and thus to become his *guru*. He was then initiated duly according to rules with the great *mantra* of Bhagavatī, united with *praṇava*. When the Navarātra period arrived, he called Dhaumya and other Brāhmaṇas, and performed the Navarātra *vrata*, so very dear to the Devī, according to his state. At this time for the satisfaction of the Devī, he caused this *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* to be read by the Brāhmaṇas, fed innumerable Brāhmaṇas and *kumārīs* (virgins) and gave in charity lots of things to the poor, orphans, and the Brāhmaṇa boys, and thus finished the *vrata*.

O Ṛṣis! Thus completing the Devīyajñā, while the King was sitting on his seat, the fiery Devarṣi Nārada came there from above playing with his *vīnā*. Seeing him there all on a sudden, the King got up and paid due respects to him by asking him to take his seat, with other necessary things. When the Devarṣi became relieved of the labor of his journey, the King asked him about his welfare and then enquired into the cause of his coming there.

13-19. 'O Devarṣi! Whence and what for are you now coming? By your arrival here I am become blessed, and feel that my Lord has come to me; now what can I serve to you? Kindly command and oblige.'

Hearing this, the Devarṣi Nārada said: 'O King! Today I saw in the Devaloka a very wonderful event. I wanted eagerly to inform that to you. Hence I have come here. Your father met with a bad turn of fate for his bad action. I saw today he assumed a divine form and he was going on a chariot. The Devas were praising him and the Apsarās were encircling him. It seemed he was going in that dress to the Maṇidvīpa. O King! You performed the Navarātra Vrata and read the *Devī Bhāgavata;* it seems as a result of that, your father has now been rewarded with such a noble and good turn of fate. Now you have become blessed and your actions have

borne fruits. You have delivered your father from hell and so you have become an ornament in your family. Today your name and fame have extended to Devaloka.'

20-30. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! Hearing these words from the mouth of Nārada, King Janamejaya became very much happy and delighted, fell prostrate at the feet of Vyāsadeva of glorious deeds and said: 'O best of Munis! By Thy Grace, today I have become blessed. Now what return can I pay to Thee save bowing down to Thee? I pray that Thou dost show such favors to me ever and again.'

O Ṛṣis! Hearing these words of the King Janamejaya, Vādarāyana Vedavyāsa blessed him and spoke to him in sweet words: 'O King! Now leave all other actions. Read always the *Devī Bhāgavatam* and worship the lotus feet of Śrī Devī. Leave off all laziness and now perform the Devī-*yajñā* with great enthusiasm. And you will surely be able to cross the bondage of this world. True there are various *Purāṇas:* the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, the *Śiva Purāṇa*, etc. but those cannot compare with one sixteenth of this *Devī Bhāgavatam*. In fact, this *Purāṇa* is the essence of all the *Purāṇas*. How can the other *Purāṇas* be compared with this, wherein is established the Devī Mūla-Prakṛti? Reading this *Purāṇa* from the beginning to the end yields the result of reading the *Vedas*. So the wise persons should try their best to study it always.'

Thus saying to Janamejaya, Vedavyāsa departed. Then the pure-minded Dhaumya and the other Brāhmaṇas highly praised the *Devī Bhāgavatam* and went to their desired places. And King Janamejaya, on the other hand, began to read and hear always the *Devī Bhāgavatam* and spent his days happily in governing his kingdom."

Here end the Thirteenth Chapter of the Twelfth Skandha on the description of Janamejaya's Devī-yajñā in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18000 verses by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIV—the Fruits of this Purāṇam

1-17. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! In days of yore, from the lotus face of the Devī Bhāgavata came out *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* in the form of half a *śloka*, as the decided conclusion of the *Vedas*. About what She gave instructions to Viṣṇu, sleeping on a leaf of a Banyan tree, that same thing—the seed of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*—Brahmā Himself expanded into one hundred *koti ślokas*. Then Vedavyāsa, in order to teach his own son Śukadeva, condensed them into eighteen thousand *ślokas* in twelve Skandhas and named it *Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam*, the present volume. That voluminous Skandha comprising one hundred *koti ślokas* compiled by Brahmā are still extant in the Deva-loka. There is no *Purāṇa* like the *Devī Bhāgavatam*—so merit-giving, holy and capable to destroy all sins. The reading of every line yields the fruits of performing many Aśvamedha sacrifices. Human beings addicted to worldly affairs will get the merit of giving land to the Brāhmaṇas, and they will enjoy also all the pleasures of the world, and in the end will go to the region of the Devī, if they can hear, after they have fasted and controlled their passions, the recitation of this *Purāṇam* from the mouth of a Paurānik Brāhmaṇa, who has been worshipped and given clothing and ornaments and is considered as a second Vedavyāsa. Or, if anybody writes the whole of the Devī Bhāgavatam with his own hand, or gets it written by a writer from the beginning to the end, and gives to a Paurānik Brāhmaṇa the Skandha placed in a box of the form of a lion made up of gold and a cow yielding milk with her calf with gold as his sacrificial fee; or if he feeds as many Brāhmaṇas as there are the number of chapters of the *Devī Bhāgavatam* and worship as many *kumārīs* (virgin girls) with saffron, sandalwood paste and ornaments and feeds them with *pāyasānna*, he gets the merits of giving lands and enjoys all the pleasures of the world, and goes in the end to the region of the Devī. He has no want of anything who daily hears with rapt devotion this *Devī Bhāgavatam*. One who has no wealth gets abundance of wealth, those who are students get knowledge, one who has no sons gets sons, if one hears this *Devī Bhāgavatam* with true devotion. A barren woman, or one who bears still-born children or whose offsprings never live long or who bears only a single child gets all her

defects removed, if she hears this *Devī Bhāgavatam* with steadfast devotion. The house where this *Purāṇa* is worshipped, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī dwell there, leaving their animosities towards each other. By the influence of this *Devī Bhāgavatam* the Dākinīs, Vetālas, Rākṣasas and other ghosts cannot cast a glance even on its devotee. If anybody gets fever and the *Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam* be read, touching him with concentrated attention, all the complaints disappear. By reading this *Bhāgavatam*, one hundred times even more difficult than the severe disease pthisis is cured.

18-20. If after performing *sandhyā*, one reads only one chapter of this *Bhāgavatam* with a collected mind, he soon acquires real knowledge. O Muni Śaunaka! While going to read this *Bhāgavatam*, first examine omens and then read. I have spoken already on this subject. If during the Śāradīya Pūjā (the autumnal Durgā Pūjā), at the Navarātra period, one reads with devotion this *Bhāgavatam*, the Devī Bhagavatī becomes greatly pleased and awards him results more than his desires.

21-31. During the Navarātra period all can read well this Skandha for the satisfaction of his *īṣṭa-deva* (his own Deity) whether he be a Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, Saura, Gānapatya or a Śākta. All can read this for the satisfaction of Lakṣmī, Umā and other Śaktis. The Vaidik Brāhmaṇas are to recite this daily for the satisfaction of the Devī Gāyatrī. This *Purāṇam* is not contradictory to any sectarian belief. The reason of this being that to whatever Deity he pays his worship, he must worship some Śakti or other; this is stated everywhere. So for the satisfaction of one's own Śakti, all can read this, without contradicting each other. Never any woman nor any Śūdra, is to read this herself or himself, even out of ignorance; rather they should hear this from the mouth of a Brāhmaṇa. This is the rule of the *śāstras*. The vibrations and the consequent results would be truer then.

O Ṛṣis! What more to say on this *skandha* than this, that this *Purāṇam* is the most excellent of all and yields great merits. It is the essence of the *Vedas*. This I tell you with great certainty. There is not the least doubt in this. Reading or hearing this yields results equivalent to reading or hearing the *Vedas*. I now bow to the Devī of the nature of ***hṛīṁ*** and established by

Gāyatrī, of the nature of everlasting existence, intelligence and bliss, Who stimulates our activities to the understanding of various subjects."

Thus hearing the excellent words of Sūta, the great *Paurānik*, all the Munis of Naimiṣāranya worshipped him specially, and as the result of hearing this *Purāṇam* glady became the servants of the lotus feet of the Devī and they attained the highest rest. The Munis expressed their humility and gratitude to Sūta frequently, and bowed down to him again and again. And they said: 'O Sūta! It is you that have saved us from this ocean of world.' Thus the great Bhāgavata Sūta, the bee drinking the honey of the lotus feet of the Devī, recited before the assemblage of the best of the Munis this *Purāṇam* from the beginning to the end, the secret of all the *Nigamas* and full of the glories of the Devī Bhagavatī. After this the Ṛṣis bowed down to him, and he blessed and honored them. Then he went away to his desired place.

Here the *Devī Bhāgavatam* ends and is fully completed.

Here ends the Fourteenth Chapter of the Twelfth Skandha on the recitation of the fruits of this Purāṇam in the Mahā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 ślokas by Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa.

Here ends as well the Full Treatise, Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam.

Āūm̐ TatSat.